WORKS IN PROGRESS

VOLUME 8, NO. 10 | THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION | FEBRUARY 1998

"It is. . . [a] false notion that there is only a limited and particular amount of freedom that must be divided up between us, with the largest and juiciest pieces of liberty going as spoils to the victor or the stronger." Audre Lorde

OPD Chief and Respected Citizen

Interview on Public Accountability of Police

WIP News Service

On December 10, 1997 an Olympia Police Officer by the name of Ed Dawson shot his gun four times at a suspect at close range — three of the shots hit Michael Harris in the chest and one was a stray. Pat recently interviewed the citizen who sat in on the Olympia Police Department's shooting review, his name is Charles Shelan, and the newly appointed Olympia Chief of Police, Gary Michels. He asked them about their roles in and views of public accountability of the police.

The following was a special report for KAOS-Radio and the Free and Fair on the Air show by Pat Tassoni. He is a participant with the monthly community newspaper Works In Progress and a founding member of the local organization Cop Watch.

The transcript is printed here, followed with some comments by Pat Tassoni.

WIP: Let's start out with some background on who you are -- professionally, are you local, and what experience you've had with the police.

Shelan: My name is Charles Shelan and I've lived in the Olympia area for nineteen years. I'm the executive director, and have been for the last eighteen years, of Community Youth Services. Through my work with the Community Youth Services I have had numerous interactions with the police all during those years on a fairly consistent basis.

WIP: You recently sat in on the shooting review board of the Olympia Police Department. Why were you selected for that?

Shelan: That's a good question, I really don't know. I was surprised and happy to do that. The new police chief that just came in, I guess, wanted someone with a more independent persective. I pleased that he asked me to serve on that panel. It was a very interesting and humbling experience.

WIP: What was your opinion of the police beforehand?

Shelan: It's hard to stereotype the police in general because the department is made up of individual officers. There are some outstanding officers and there are some that should probably find work elsewhere. It's like any other organization where there is a lot of people working. I've generally found the police here to be responsive to issues I've brought up with them. I had a pretty good opinion of the police here in Olympia.

"Police officers have a lot of power and it is important for us to be open and not hidden, to be not closed, to have community involvement in our practices. Whenever there is an incident that affects the public, I think that it is only appropriate that the public be involved in giving us input." Chief Michels

WIP: What did you do on this review board?

Shelan: The review board literally lasted all day. Prior to the actual review board, all the members were sent a packet of information that was around 250 pages in all. It involved the investigation, all the reports, interviews with the eyewitnesses or other witnesses with the officers. It was a very exhaustive written report and I basically took the entire weekend to go through it. That was the prep before the actual review board.

The review board took place at 8 o'clock on Monday morning. It started out first with introductions. Then one of the members asked to go to the crime scene which we all thought was a very good idea. We spent about an hour to an hour and a half at the now vacated apartment which gave us a better idea of the location and the flow of events. It really helped to put things into perspective. After that, we interviewed the two police officers and we interviewed detectives from the Sheriff's Department. They brought in all the physical evidence and we read more reports and we had a lot of discussion between and amongst ourselves. And then we issued our opinion. So that's basically the process.

The meeting was opened up by the new police chief coming in. He set a good tone. He told us why we were there and he told us that if any of us had a minority opinion, he would welcome that. And he told us that he would welcome if anyone of us wanted to say something to him in private afterwards. So he really left the door wide open for all of us.

WIP: How did you see yourself assisting that process and did you, as a citizen, find anything that the officers may have overlooked?

Shelan: We found a couple of things which we talked about were additional training around suicide (because we felt it was clearly a case of attempted suicide on the part of the victim) and we also talked about issues of "exit planning." As officers go into a dangerous situation, officers need to be really cognizant of their surroundings and basically how to get out of there quickly when needed. Those were

(Continued page 15)

Exposing the Myths About Prisons

Sonja Sivesind

In the US, over 1,227 people each week are committed to prison. Over 200 prisons are being constructed nationwide. In the state of California, the education budget is $4.7 billion and falling, while the money spent on jail and prisons is $5.2 billion and rising.

Who is being sent to prison? Why are they being sent to prison, and why is money being spent on the construction of new prisons rather than employment programs or education? What is happening to the rights of prisoners?

Although news stories about violent crime have skyrocketed in recent years, actual cases of crime have not increased. Well over half of prisoners are convicted of nonviolent crimes. The money lost by society because of white collar crime well exceeds the loss of all burglaries, car thefts, larcenies, and robberies combined.

We must ask the questions: who is being sent to prison? Why are they being sent to prison, and why is money being spent on the construction of new prisons rather than employment programs or education? What is happening to the rights of prisoners?

The political, economic, and social dynamics of today's society are especially apparent in the context of prisons. Prisons can act as an indicator and expose the realities of our culture and political economy. In a sense, prisons can be seen as a barometer for all that is ill at the core of our society, described most succinctly by bell hooks as "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (Rosenblatt). Therefore, prisons should be central to our consciousness and our work.

White Supremacy: Who is being sent to prison is determined greatly by race. African American males make up six percent of the US population, yet nearly 50 percent of prisoners are African American men. This is not because African American men are more prone to commit crimes. In 1796, the NY legislature voted to free all slaves living in the state and on the very same day, authorized the state's first prison. After the Civil War, the 13th Amendment officially abolished slavery for everyone but those convicted of crime. This followed with a tremendous increase of African American convicts. Standing in an area of town or walking at night became the criminal acts of "loitering," and "breaking curfew." Imprisoning African Americans was a way to maintain the power, economic, and race relationships that had existed under slavery. Such institutionalized racism continues today. The California Youth Authority imprisons over 9000 youth; 75 percent are youth of color. In the Federal prison system, sentences for African Americans are 20 percent longer than those which whites receive for similar crimes.

Capitalist: Along with racism, economics plays a huge role in deciding who goes to prison and why crimes are committed. In 1990, 58 percent of the people in prison were unemployed at the time of arrest, and 68 percent earned less than $15,000 a year. Women, for instance, are predominantly convicted of shoplifting, prostitution, or other economic crimes. In a 1978 study, The National Urban League claimed that the top priority of the federal government's agenda to deal with the crime problem should be national policy of full employment. The same solution is being demanded today. On top of all this, one study found that 53 percent of low-income defendants received prison sentences compared to only 26 percent of high-income defendants.

Patriarchy: Since 1980 the male prison population has increased by 160 percent, while the increase of women prisoners is 275 percent. The few cases which are violent and not economic, are often women acting in self defense against

(Continued page 8)

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a community newspaper sponsored by the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Rainbow Coalition or the Workers In Progress and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions:

Correspondence, articles, art, and photographs are always welcome. Please, when possible, put articles on a 3.5" IBM-compatible disk (text preferred). Artwork and photos should be camera-ready/black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number. Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)

Send submissions to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295, worksinprogress@juno.com, or come by our office and drop it in the "WIP Box" located in the Liberation Cafe.

Back Issues:

A complete set of back issues is located in the library of Liberation Cafe along with a chrono-index.

WIP is also being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

WORKERS IN PROGRESS

Dave Campbell, Frank Hoffman, Teresa Jennings, Jerome Johnson, Evelyn Montague, Giles O'Dell, Wendy Ortiz, Hali Panneton, Tara Perkins, CJ Russo, Marie Smith, Sylvia Smith, Pat Tassoni

Mission Statement:

"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. Works In Progress is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause:

We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Governing Tool:

The following statement will become part of the Editorial Policy and will be the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause: *WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline:

Friday, Feb. 20th

6pm at Liberation Cafe

Proofreading Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 24th
7 pm at Liberation Cafe

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Events, ETC.

Pro-Affirmative Action Puppet Action

Monday February 2,

noon: downtown Olympia. Action by the Art & Revolution Collective.

Call EPIC @ 866-6000 x6144 for details

2nd Annual Legislative Day for Latinos.

Tuesday, February 5,

10am-4pm, State Capitol, Olympia.

Weekly NO!200 meetings:

Wednesdays @ 7pm, in Lacey. Please call Anna Schlect @ 360/943-7469 or Wendy Ortiz @ 360/943-6870 for more information.

Howard Zinn in Olympia

Wednesday, February 4th

Capital High Gym at 7pm

Talk by Howard Zinn "Bringing Democracy Alive" with opening music with Citizen's Band and Timothy Hull. Benefit for Olympia Political Cultural Center.

Tickets on sale in advance or at the door. Call 352-7336.

Free AIM's Peltier

Saturday, February 7

It starts at 12pm in Tacoma

There will be a march and rally for justice for Native American political prisoner Leonard Peltier at People's Park, Martin Luther King Jr. Way and S. 9th St. The rally is at 1pm at the U.S. Federal Courthouse, 1717 Pacific Avenue. Contact (253) 383-9108 for more info.

Know Your Rights

within the welfare system workshop

Friday, February 6th

1-5pm*

Olympia Timberland Library

The state's welfare-to-work program, WorkFirst, began August 1, 1997. It became mandatory November 1st for everyone, with very few exceptions. Most workers started using the program even before the rules were written. This workshop will give you an idea of what the program is, what the rules are, and how to make it work for you.

We will have fact sheets on different parts of the program: the general rules, child care, what happens when you become employed, and even how to go to school. You might learn how to negotiate with your worker and the politics of welfare. This will also give you a chance to meet with other parents who live near you, give you a chance to support them in their efforts to move their families off welfare and out of poverty and for them to support you. We will also talk about getting together on a regular basis to share information and strategies on how to make the welfare system really work for families.

Child care available, please call Monica at 360/753-4459 to reserve space or for more information. "*" indicates that all this time may not be used, but it is scheduled.

Continuing War on Iraq

More than 1 million people have died in the past 7 years in Iraq as a direct result of the UN imposed Sanctions against Iraq. 600,000 of these people were children. This is part of the continuing war on Iraq after the Gulf War. We need to do our part to end the sanctions.

On Friday, February 6 at the Liberation Cafe in downtown olympia, above bulldog news...at 7:00pm, there will be a panel and video about the current situation in Iraq that you are not seeing on the mainstream biased news. We

(Continued page 13)

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FEBRUARY 1998

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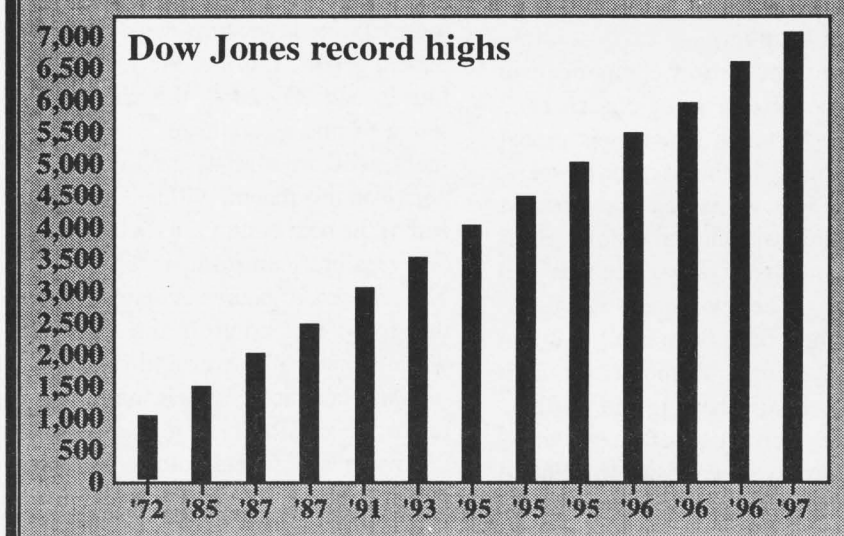
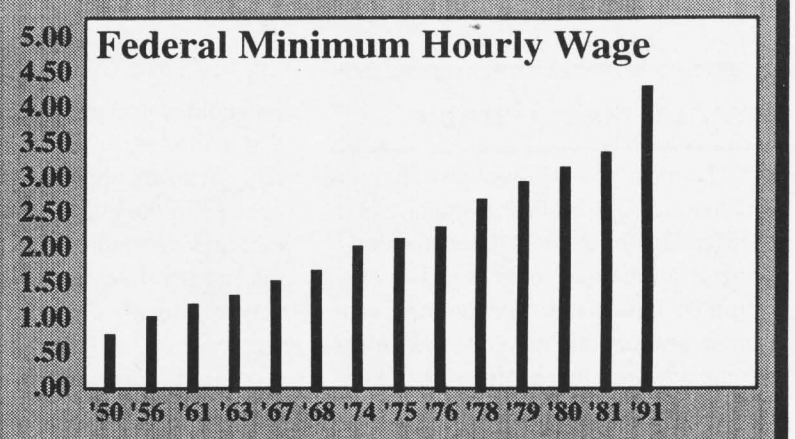
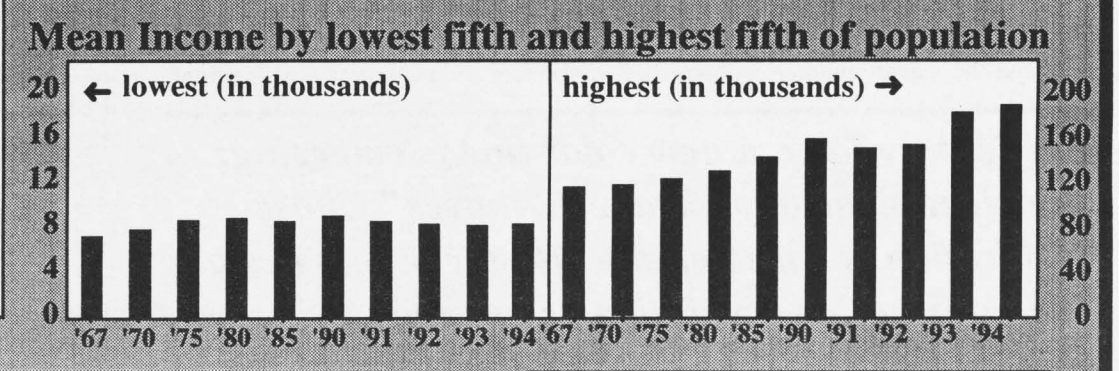
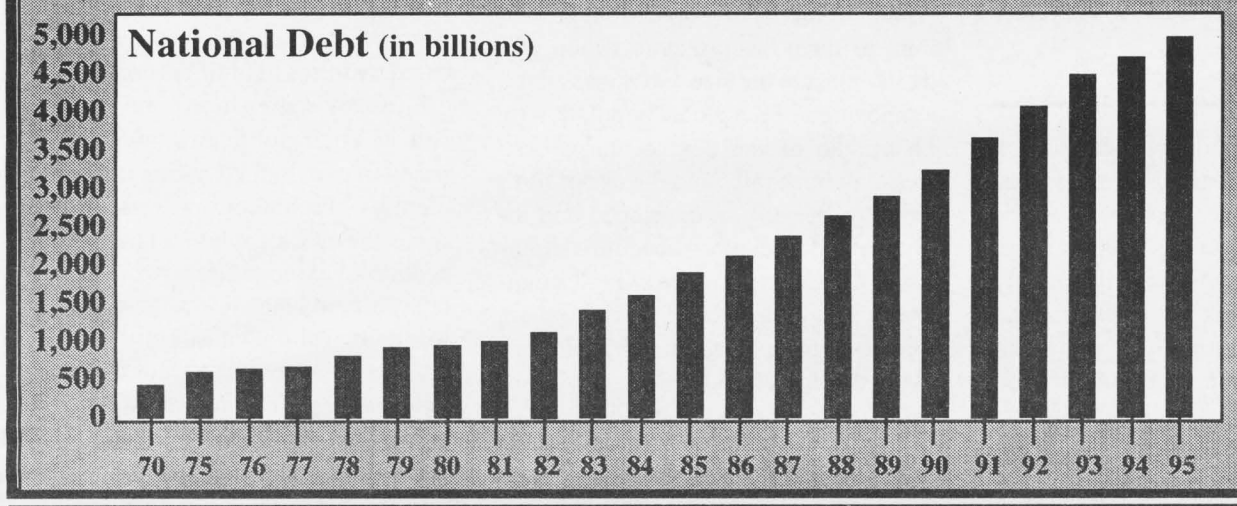
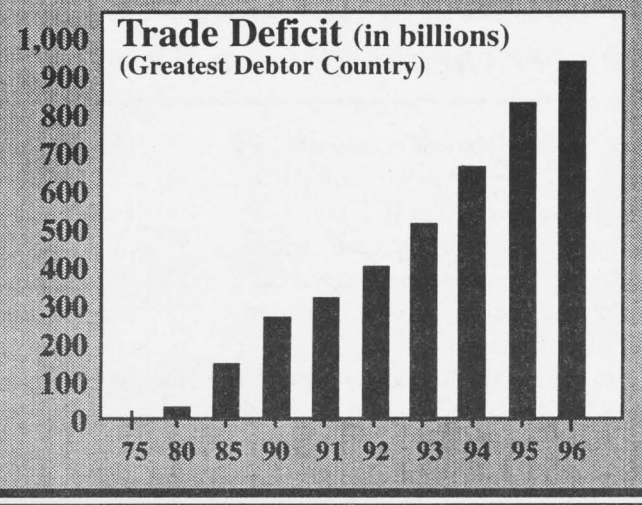
'31 Cincinnati button







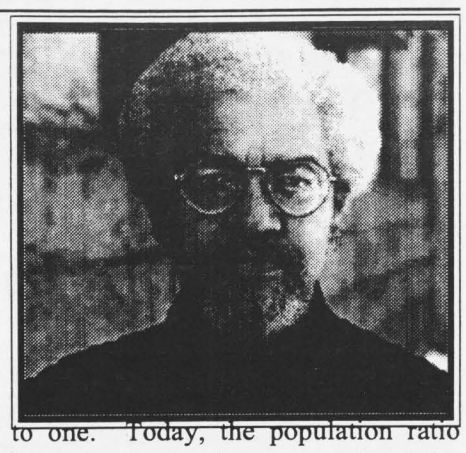




Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 **1979-** Patricia Hearst is released from jail, Pres. Carter commuted her sentence **1893-** Without authorization John L. Stevens declares Hawaii US protectorate	**2** **1996** - Ken Behring announces he is going to move the Seahawks to California **1995** - Boeing announces 7,000 layoffs scheduled over the next year	**3** **Festival** of Setsubun, **end** of winter holiday **1904-** Colombian troops clash with U S Marines in Panama **1908-** Supreme Court rules Union-sponsored boycotts illegal	**4** **1950-** Prominent US scientists in U.S. protest the use of any future hydrogen bomb as "a weapon of war". **1974-** Symbionese Liberation Army kidnaps Patricia Hearst	**5** **1902-** French National Assembly reduces miners' work day to nine hours **1917-** Congress nullifies Wilson's veto of Immigration Act requiring literacy tests	**6** **1964-** Castro orders water supply cut off to US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay **1904-** Maryland joins Southern states, officially disenfranchises African-Americans	**7** **1996** - Tacoma Public Utilities begins releasing water from Alder Lake. By late the next day, the release gradually has been increased four-fold
8 **1996** - Residents evacuate along Nisqually river to escape flood waters **1913-** British suffragettes destroy the London-Glasgow telephone line	**9** **1905-** Csarist troops slaughter 150 workers at Nifka mine, Poland **1775-** British Parliament declares the colony of Mass. to be in a state of rebellion	**10** **1936-** German Gestapo given control of concentration camps and is independent of administrative courts. They may arrest any individual and hold him indefinitely	**11** *full moon* ● **1937-** GM recognizes UAW Union ending the famous GM sit-down strike **1790-** Society of Friends presents 1st petition calling for abolition of slavery	**12** **1953-** USSR breaks relations w/ Israel when delegation is bombed in Tel Aviv **1913-** Albany, NY: widespread violations of child labor laws reported	**13** **1996** - TESC students gather to protest arming of campus security **1995** - Cal Anderson announces he has AIDS and has been dianosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma	**14** **1996** - TESC students block campus entrance to protest arming of security **1996** - 12 tree-sitters protest old growth logging Dosewallips River watershed
15 **1893-** John L. Stevens belatedly submits Treaty of Annexation of Hawaii to Senate **1831-** Calhoun publishes letters of Jackson's misconduct in 1818 Seminole War	**16** **1760-** Indian hostages held by South Carolina Governor Lyttleton are slain in retaliation for renewed raids of Cherokees, breaking peace treaty of December 1759	**17** **1996** - Logging protest on the Olympic National Forest at Quilcene in response to the 55 acre Rocky Brook timber sale in the Dosewallips River drainage	**18** **1995** - NAACP appoints Myrlie Evers-Williams as its first woman chairperson **1903-** Illinois legislator David Underwood tries to bar football in his state	**19** **1996** - 10,000 rally at Capitol for Working Families/ living wage **1942-** Roosevelt signs Ex Order for exclusion of suspect persons from war zones designated by military	**20** **1725-** Wakefield, NH Colonists take first recorded Native scalps, which paid a bounty of 100 pounds each **1905-** Explosion entombs 100 miners in Alabama	**21** **1965-** NYC: Malcom X is assassinated **1885-** Contract Labor law by congress prohibits contracting abroad for immigrant labor in return for passage to America
22 **1996** - Lacey gives preliminary approval for 1st 2 phases of Hawks Prairie Planned Community **1996** - Gov Lowry announces he won't run for second term	**23** **1995** - The Dow Jones breaks 4,000 **1996** - Judge Thomas McPhee rejects all legal arguments against state financing of the Mariner baseball stadium	**24** **1995** - US Fish and Wildlife Service propose protection of the Western snowy plover's nesting sites. Plover was placed on threatened species list in 1993	**25** **1839-** Seminoles and African-american allies shipped from Florida to the West **1919-** Oregon introduces first state tax on gasoline for use in road construction	**26** **1870-** Wyatt Outlaw, black leader of Union League in NC lynched **1965-** Jimmie Lee Jackson, civil rights activist, dies of injuries inflicted by officers in Marion, AL	**27** **1995** - Olympia hires a Bellevue attorney to investigateAllegations of sexual harassment and gender discrimination in OPD **1996** - Gary Locke runs for Governor	**28** **1996** - The volunteers of the Eastside Women's Health Clinic Defense ask Olympia City Council members to create a buffer zone around the clinic

Along the Color Line

Globalization, Cyberspace, and Racism



Dr. Manning Marable

The most powerful yet grossly misunderstood political term popularized in the decade of the 1990s is "Globalization." Globalization refers to the massive revolution in information technology, economic production, markets, and management which increasingly characterizes the development of the entire world. It is also, to a considerable extent, the consolidation of the technological cultures and the private market economic model of development represented by the United States, Western Europe and Japan since World War II.

The creation of cyberspace technology during the past decade has radically transformed the way people communicate and conduct business, from the level of our neighborhoods to the entire globe. These changes can be measured in literally every aspect of human endeavor and activity. For example, technology is rapidly replacing the necessity for certain forms of labor. Workers who were trained to do manufacturing and labor intensive industry are being replaced by machines. Most businesses have radically transformed their entire procedures for producing, distributing and marketing products. At the level of daily life, the new technology is expressed in the elimination of paper and currency as mediums of exchange. E-mail and the Internet are increasingly the way millions of people communicate with each other. Books and newspapers are rapidly becoming anachronisms. ATM and debit cards are replacing checks and cash. Access to cyberspace becomes the entry way to educational advancement and economic development.

...a century later, a new color line is emerging: the technologically advanced "haves" whose civilization is based on the latest technologies and the information revolution versus the miseducated, under-educated "have-nots" who are overwhelmingly non-European.

The real question we should ask ourselves about globalization is in whose interest does it serve? Who will set the rules for globalization? What nations, classes, or political elites are potentially the biggest winners or losers? And perhaps most importantly, from a humanistic perspective, can globalization serve a broader social justice purpose: the utilization of technology and the information revolution for the reduction and even the elimination of poverty, disease and ignorance. Will globalization reinforce or retard the forces of race hatred, social intolerance and nationalism? We may find that in the environment of globalized capitalism, racial divisions and hierarchies structured around social inequality may actually be strengthened and reinforced by the new innovations and developments in global technology. We may be confronting new forms of globalized racism as we enter the new millennium.

What may be the key components in the construction of a new global racism? One major factor to consider is global demographics. In the past thirty years, the world has witnessed the greatest mass migrations in human history. Hundreds of millions of people are today on the move. The two great waves of migration are, first, from rural to urban areas, and second, from the southern part of the hemisphere to the north.

The transformation of racial demographics we have seen inside the United States is also rapidly occurring across the globe. Experts in population growth point to three basic factors which will greatly change the size and racial/ethnic composition of the global population by the middle of the next century: first, declining birth rates and the use of birth control especially in developed and industrialized societies; second, the increase in life expectancies in all countries, and falling rates of mortality; and third, the rapid increase in all populations above the age of 65.

What are the racial implications of these demographic trends? Today, the population of Africa is approximately the same as the populations of Europe, the United States, and Canada combined, roughly one to one. By the year 2060, the ratio of Africa's population to that of Europe and North America will be three to one. Today, the population ratio between the developing world and the industrialized western world (United States, Japan, Europe, etc.) is roughly four to one. By 2060, this ratio will be seven to one. People of European descent, who are already a numerical minority on this planet, will become by the end of the next century, a dwindling and fairly insignificant group in terms of size. The paradox of course is that this is also the group that controls the disproportionate share of power and resources.

Another factor which may contribute to the possibility of global racism is unequal access to technology. A century ago, people of African descent in the United States, and African and Asian people throughout the world, were dominated by forms of political control called "Jim Crow segregation" and "colonialism." Their political domination was based in part on their racial and national identity. Technology was used to reinforce the rule of white supremacy and economic exploitation. Now a century later, a new color line is emerging: the technologically advanced "haves" whose civilization is based on the latest technologies and the information revolution versus the miseducated, under-educated "have-nots" who are overwhelmingly non-European. Will Africa and much of the Third World face, in the not-too-distant future, a new "high technology-based colonialism"? Will the new Jim Crow of the twenty-first century be created in cyberspace?

Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of History and Director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University, New York City. "Along the Color Line" is distributed free of charge and regularly appears in over 325 black and progressive publications worldwide.

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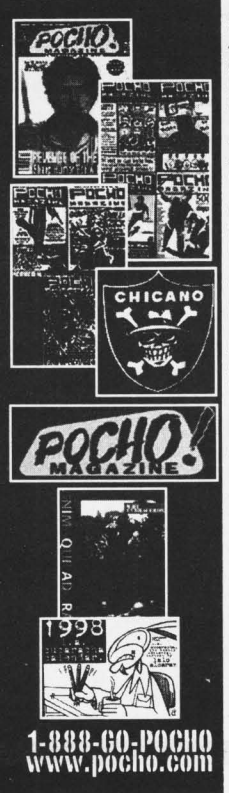

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Celebrate Black History Month

On Front

How I Spent MLK Day

Jerome Johnson

"Four hundred years later, the Negro still is not free."

--Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

August 1963

"America has traveled, and is still traveling, a long hard road to redeem this commitment to equal justice. It is a path haunted by the ghosts of slavery, Civil War, Jim Crow and internment, a path littered with desecrated churches and synagogues, persistent intolerance and bigotry."

--Asst. AG (Civil Rights) Bill Lann Lee

December 1997

8:02 a.m., a gray Monday morning.

Ensconced in my nice warm bed (thank God for it), I stretched leisurely and thought about my day. All I had to do was help my best friend move her appliances. Then a little pool, a little dinner, TV with housework, then bed. I liked it--no work at all.

I rolled out of bed, listening to the MLK Day coverage on TV. There wasn't much yet, except the usual clips and tributes. I did catch a clip of Jesse Jackson, being interviewed on CNN by one of their financial analysts. Clad in his usual expensive suit, Rev. Jackson was discussing his efforts to get more women and people of color into major league capitalism. He advocated more diversity in Wall Street firms and more access to capital for big businesses.

I thought of all those Vietnamese, Chinese, Indonesians and the women and people of color working like slaves in Nike's factories overseas. I thought of the maquiladoras on the Mexico-US border. If Dr. King had lived to be interviewed on CNN, I know what he would've discussed, and I don't think his suit would've been so expensive.

I was getting dressed when a friend of mine--also a civil rights leader--called to wish me well. We chatted about the current climate and he invited me to dinner. Thank you, Chris--I'm still feeling good from your call. It made my week.

I drove to my copine's house and we moved stuff. CNN was on but we were on the road when "Talkback Live" came on, so I missed most of the coverage (C-SPAN had gone on to other things whenever I checked). After we knocked off, the four of us--two whites, a black, and a Japanese-American--went out to play darts and had a great time. We didn't talk much about Martin, but I don't think we had to--we were living up to his vision.

The next day I was visiting some other friends of mine who have young children--the girl is eight and the boy is six. The proud parents eagerly showed me their home video of the children's participation in the school's MLK Day activities. They did well, and like parents the world over, Mom and Dad couldn't wait to show them off.

I saw the diverse classes, the young faces intent on getting their parts right as they performed. They carried placards and signs. The atmosphere was upbeat and positive. As in schools all over Thurston County, the walls were full of pictures of Dr. King, the places he demonstrated, mounted quotes, biographic clips about him and his family.

...demand the right as citizens of Washington state to vote on I-200 in November. Then exercise one of the rights Dr. King and others fought for. Vote NO on I-200.

I remembered when I was a boy, going to school at Garfield Elementary. Every recess and lunch period was a race riot, with me as the target. I was six when Dr. King was murdered, and my mother picked me up from school every day because if I tried to walk home I caught hell from the white kids.

On the way home I rode past Garfield. It was recess, and the playground was full. I saw children of all backgrounds, and everyone was busy having fun. No one was being hit, no one was throwing rocks, no one yelling "Nigger!" and "Chocolate Boy!" All I heard were shouts, squeals, and laughter.

I got home and fixed dinner while the news was on. There was the usual tributes and celebrations, especially in Tacoma and Seattle. One commercial showed a picture of Martin with the caption "Live the Dream."

I grinned. Thinking of my upcoming town meeting on race and racism Feb. 21 at United Churches, I put my dishes in the sink, switched off stuff, and went to bed.

In Riverside, California, a courageous school board stands by its decision to name a high school after Dr. King.

In Memphis, police use tear gas to break up a confrontation between rallying Klansmen and counter-demonstrators.

And in Olympia, the Legislature is deciding how to handle Initiative 200. "If the vote was tomorrow, they'd win," says the Rep. Marlin Applewick (D-Seattle) of I-200's supporters. "If it's in November, they lose. With the progressive nature of this state, 200 fails."

I urge everyone to call Speaker Clyde Ballard at 360/786-9999 and Sen. Dan McDonald, 360/786-7694. Tell them you demand the right as citizens of Washington state to vote on I-200 in November. Then exercise one of the rights Dr. King and others fought for. Vote NO on I-200.

Sponsored by The Thurston County Rainbow Coalition

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FACILITATED BY JEROME JOHNSON
THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COORDINATOR

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Kill Your Television—Or Make Your Own Damn Programming!

Wendy Ortiz

I watch tv. Yeah, I watch it. I even own one. There are even programs I will watch...gasp!...weekly. Sometimes I have to smirk secretly at people who say, sometimes from their perch above mine, "I don't have one of *those*" or "I don't watch TV." Granted, that's a big statement in this culture. But even Michael Moore, man after my own heart, has chided liberal and progressive folks alike for not watching tv. Tv can be the pulse of the nation; it can show us the half-truths and lies that the rest of the world may or may not latch onto at any given moment. It can have the capacity to link us to what we despise and fear and provoke us to fight harder for change. So, here's a news flash for those who don't watch tv and think no one should (me being an ex- "Kill Your TV" sticker owner): watching tv does not make me any less of a radical woman of color. I can watch tv and decide, hey, this thing I'm watching sucks. And I can have conversations about the whys and wherefores of its suck-status — and subjects like race, class, and gender are inevitably brought up.

Of course I am sick of tv shows that portray cities like New York and Los Angeles as 90-100% white. I am sick of seeing Latinos portrayed exclusively as maids, gang members, or seductive antagonists. I want to scream everytime I see people of color depicted in limited, stereotypical roles. I want to throw the box out my window because women's worthiness in commercials, sitcoms, etc. is constantly related to their color, their weight, and their ability to attract men. I'm even sick of Ellen not being able to call herself the L word. I could rant endlessly.

What's the next logical step? Denounce my electronic box? Give it away and pretend it doesn't exist? Turn it off so that it can continue to infect everyone else but me, because I'm too progressive to watch it?

No, I'm gonna make my own tv. I'm dreaming of non-corporate sponsored programming. I'm dreaming of animation that makes us think, not buy; informative series produced by all sectors of the population; shows that are entertaining and educational without condescension. I especially dream of Latina women and other women of color in all roles; and women over size 14 on every show because that's reality.

Because I can't replace all the networks with my special brand of programming (and wouldn't want to monopolize this media, as happens today), I'm part of a group that hopes to change the face of programming, one channel at a time, beginning with channel 3, TCTV.

I'm gonna make my own tv. I'm dreaming of non-corporate sponsored programming. I'm dreaming of animation that makes us think, not buy; informative series produced by all sectors of the population; shows that are entertaining and educational without condescension.

Radical Alternative Media Project (RAMP) is a group whose intention is to import videos that are concerned with social justice and progressive change. These videos will be shown on TCTV, and we hope to also sponsor public screenings of videos to alert people to our project and foster support in the community. Currently, conservative and religious viewpoints are frequently aired on public access channels because of their ability to fund themselves along the way. RAMP has received a generous donation from the Community Sustaining Fund which allows us a budget of one video per month. We have done research into the availability of free, cheap and not-so-cheap videos. There are numerous distributors out there, but the surface has only been scratched to unearth a few we hope to support regularly, such as the Flying Focus Video Collective in Portland, Oregon. We are making every effort to import videos concerning labor issues; videos by women and people of color; media criticism; timely videos, such as the Howard Zinn video currently on the air in preparation for his visit to Olympia; and news regarding activists from all over the United States and possibly, the world. This list will grow and support for this project will show itself by interested organizations sponsoring videos pertaining to their particular issues.

Our first event was held at the Olympia Timberland Library on January 24. It was a public screening of the first two videos in a trilogy entitled "From the Back Alleys to the Supreme Courts and Beyond," an award-winning documentary about the political history of abortion rights. The audience had a chance to view the films and then become more than an audience by taking part in a post-film discussion. This is the beginning of what we hope will be more public screenings, more participation from viewers, and people playing a more active role in tv programming.

The donations of several women's groups and women's health organizations made this first public screening possible. RAMP chose to support the makers of this excellent trilogy by purchasing it, though it was a free tape for use by groups like ours. As inclusive as we hope to be, we hope that the community puts energy and funds towards selecting and sponsoring videos so that we can air more than one a month. Five people in an organization putting up $5 each buys a video that our group can air on TCTV. We're doing the work in editing suite #3 for you, so tell us what you want to see!

The media is a venue that progressives have often been elbowed out of. Television contains a scarcity of material of interest to progressives, unless it's a subject for critique and ridicule. Alternative media is available in books and on the radio, but tv and film are lacking. We hope to change that. RAMP is not limited to video just as media is not limited to video. Projects could include letter-writing campaigns so that our voices are acknowledged in print in mainstream papers; efforts to acquire alternative videos and literature for our local libraries; and garnering public support for already existing progressive publications like the one you are holding in your hands.

A project like this one is long overdue. We hope that the community will support us in this new and potentially educating and activating venture. For more information, please call 360-352-7336 or contact us at P.O. Box 295, Olympia WA 98507. There are opportunities for research, fundraising, video editing, staging of public screenings, video acquisitions—and just plain tv watching.

Currently, RAMP, a subgroup of the Olympia Political Cultural Center is showing ***Howard Zinn: Reclaiming People's History****, and the trailer for the trilogy* ***"From the Back Alleys to the Supreme Courts and Beyond,"*** *which will be aired from February through April. February will also feature videos on Black history, racism in the media, and* ***"Free Indeed,"*** *a video about white privilege and dismantling racism.*

RAMP would also like to acknowledge the ongoing work of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the new show Progressive Community Roundtable, for leading the way towards having a consistent, progressive voice present on TCTV.

SANS CULÔTTE

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SAT FEB 21 9pm HANNAH'S
SAT FEB 28 9pm TEQUILA BAR

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February 8 - 11
Cotton To Harlem: Sun/Tues@6:30, Mon/Wed@9pm
Chameleon Street: Mon/Wed @ 6:30, Sun/ues @ 9pm
Saturday, February 14th
Foxy Brown @ 8pm & Hip-hop dance party @ 10pm
February 15 - 18
Killer of Sheep: Sun/Tues @ 6:30, Mon/Wed @ 9pm
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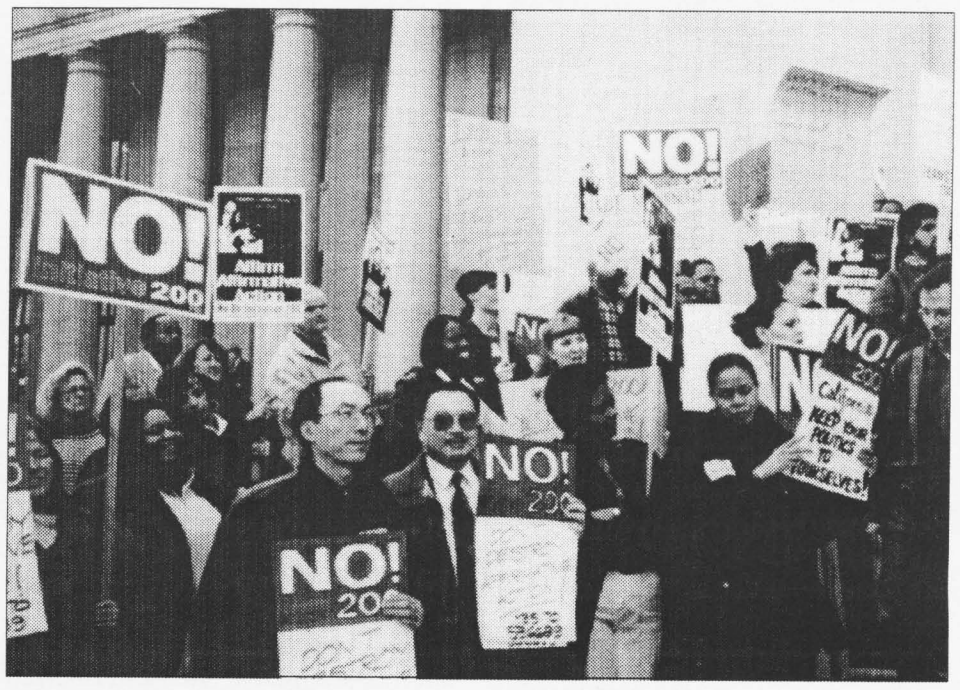
NO! 200 Campaign Update:

Aggressive Grassroots Organizing In Store After Lobbying Legislature

photos by Wendy Ortiz

Governor Gary Locke expresses his support for affirmative action at the January NO!200 Lobby Day.



Among those present at the Lobby Day Rally were representatives of organized labor, Radical Women, Centro de la Raza, Quakers, Washington Churches, state legislators, students from Western Washington Universit and, The Evergreen State College, and individual supporters.

WIP News Service

For those who don't know, I-200 is part of a national special interest strategy that recently targeted Houston (Prop A) and California (Prop 209). Deceptively titled the "Washington Civil Rights Initiative," Initiative 200 seeks to dismantle affirmative action programs policies in Washington state. It would prohibit the current consideration of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public employment, public contracting, and public education admissions and hiring decisions. It was submitted as an initiative to the legislature and brought well over the required amount ot necessary signatures. These signatures were gathered using paid, out of state signature gatherers and by using deceptive tactics about I-200's true intent. Legislators could pass I-200 directly into law. Governor Locke would not be allowed to veto such a decision.

I-200 is anti-civil rights.
Make your voice heard! Call the Legislative Hotline today @ 1-800-562-6000 and tell them you want to keep affirmative action in Washington State. I-200 is unnecessary, divisive and offers zero solutions to address discrimination that exists today.

The amount of signatures gathered will not stop NO!200 organizers and supporters from defending affirmative action. The opponents of Initiative 200 announced an aggressive new strategy to defeat the initiative. During a Lobby Day event at the State Capitol on Tuesday, January 27th, the NO! 200 Coalition unveiled its new approach.

"The people of Washington must be given a clear choice in November, and this alternative provides them with a more careful and reasoned approach to the affirmative action debate," said Kathleen Russell, the NO!200 Campaign Manager. She was referring to SB 6689, which is slated to be introduced Tuesday by sponsor Senator Eugene Prince (R-Thornton), as an alternative to I-200. If approved by lawmakers, SB 6689 would appear on the November ballot alongside Initiative 200.

SB 6689 is titled "An act relating to ensuring equal opportunity without quotas in public employment, education, and contracting" and it has found bipartisan support from across the state.

"Affirmative action has provided many qualified women and people of color with an equal opportunity to compete for a quality education and a decent job," explains Russell. "This bill clarifies the confusion around affirmative action and addresses the public's concerns by stating affirmatively that no unqualified people will be hired by the state or admitted to our colleges or universities and by ensuring that no quotas will be used," stated Russell.

If Senator Prince and the NO! 200 Campaign are successful, voters will be presented with a clear choice between I-200, which will end affirmative action in Washington, and the alternative, which seeks to protect popular outreach programs and recruitment programs.

For more information on the NO! 200 Campaign, please call 206-292-5715, or locally call 360-943-7469.

I-200 is anti-civil rights. **Make your voice heard! Call the Legislative Hotline today @ 1-800-562-6000 and tell them you want to keep affirmative action in Washington State. I-200 is unnecessary, divisive and offers zero solutions to address discrimination that exists today.**

The No! 200 Campaign Legislative Call to Action

Senator Pam Roach will hold hearings on Anti-Affirnative Action Initiative 200 and on the No! 200 Campaign's Alternative Bill SB 6689.
WHAT: Hearing on I-200 and Alternative SB 6689
DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEB. 4th, 1998
TIME: 1:30 - 3:30PM
WHERE: Senate Law and Justice Committee
PLACE: Senate Hearing Room # 1 CHERBERG BLDG STATE CAPITOL Olympia, WA.
CONTACT: 206-292-5715

There will be limited time for testimony, so the No! 200 Campaign is approaching University Presidents and Regents, CEO's and elected officials to testify before the Republican-controlled committee. (Senator Roach has a history of creating her own rules, and while we wish everyone could testify, she has only allotted 30 to 45 minutes for both bills to be heard. We hope to maximize our effectiveness by offering two panels of influential opinion leaders.

The No! 200 Campaign is mobilizing all No! 200 supporters to attend the hearing and provide the Law and Justice Committee with written testimony.

With anticipated media coverage of this hearing we'd like to demonstrate as much opposition to Initiative 200 as possible. No signs are permitted in hearing rooms.

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From the Inside

Wastebins of (In)humanity

an abusive partner. Between 2.1-8 million women are abused by their partner each year, and thousands of women nationwide are in prison for killing their abuser. Most of these women are first time offenders.

Health Care: Within the prisons, human rights are being taken away as conservative politicians attempt to dehumanize prisoners to such a level that their basic human rights are viewed as privileges. Health care is one example. At least 100 prisoners at the Central California Women's Facility are known to have HIV, but there is no HIV/AIDS medical doctor; and women who are HIV positive or have full blown AIDS receive no routine exams or clinical follow-up.

Privatization and Labor: As corporations attempt to privatize the prison industry, rehabilitation is placed lower and lower on the job description of the prison industry. When prisoners act as laborers for private companies, those companies want a full work day, eliminating the few programs designed to give the prisoner skills. This also acts as a blow against workers on the outside who lose their jobs to prisoners who are not allowed to organize and don't receive a minimum wage. These private interests would profit both from overcrowding and lengthy prison terms.

Human Rights: Another example of the horrid treatment of prisoners takes place with the severe physical and psychological abuse in the Maximum Security Prisons. These prisons use beatings, control units, mind games and solitary confinement. It is a myth that solitary confinement is used for only short periods of time. It is usually a period of months and most commonly years that prisoners are confined to what academic literature calls "the most individually destructive, psychologically crippling, and socially alienating experience that could conceivably exist within the borders of the country." (Rosenblatt) These prisons are not intended for rehabilitation, yet over 40 percent of the adult prison population is confined here.

Political Prisoners: The most frequently disciplined groups of prisoners are those with mental handicaps, Black prisoners, and jailhouse lawyers. Political prisoners, which include persons incarcerated for actions: in support of self-determination struggles, opposing the illegal policies of the US government, as a direct result of political action, affiliation, belief, and for defending and fighting abusers, are also targeted for harsh treatment. The director of the Bureau of Prison stated that the conditions of sensory deprivation, extreme isolation, and sexual degradation for women prisoners who are confined to a behavior modification unit, were necessary to provide security. Their radical politics made them a threat to the community and escape pone. Women were told by other prison officials that their only way out of this unit was to renounce their political associations.

There seems to be a specific agenda in sentencing. For instance, offense involving five grams of crack cocaine carry a mandatory minimum of five years without parole. But it takes 500 grams of powder cocaine to draw that same sentence. In 1992, three out of five powder offenders were white, while 93 percent of crack convicts were black. Another example in 1986, a man convicted of planning and carrying out bombings - without making any warning calls - often occupied health clinics where abortions were performed, was sentenced to ten years in prison and paroled after 46 months. In contrast, Raymond Levasseur was convicted of bombing four unoccupied military targets in protest against US foreign policies, and sentenced to 45 years in prison.

The system as it exists is not even meeting the goals of the government. In 1991, 34.8 percent of prisoners who were released were rearrested for felony or serious misdemeanor within three years. There are no jobs for people when they get out. They have not been allowed education, skill training, or rehabilitation programs. Such intense violence has been used to break their spirits and individuality, that when released, they have few social skills and are unfamiliar with alternative methods to violence. The Minnesota Assistant Commissioner of Corrections even said, "There is no evidence of a relationship between the incarceration rate and violent crime. We're in the business of tricking people into thinking that spending hundred of millions [of dollars] for new prisons will make them safe."

Analyzing the prison industry must be done under the greater realization that we must radically change the economic and political system which we currently live under, and create a new society where punishment and violence are not used to justify building more prisons, which ignore issues of rehabilitation, respect, and the root causes for crime. We have to expose the myths surrounding prisons, and educate each other about the real dangers including unemployment, lack of access to education and health care, poverty, the government prioritizing corporations over people, and police abuse.

Prison Awareness Week

February 23-27, is a chance to educate ourselves about these issues. With education we can begin to debunk the myth surrounding prisons, and recognize who the real criminals in society are, those continuing to criminalize people of color, the young, the poor, and the radical. By working to understand the connections of our struggles as they relate to prisons, we can strengthen our movement against the injustices of the prison industry and in society at large.

The Prison Action Committee meets on Wednesdays at 3pm at Evergreen in CAB 320. Books to Prisoners is located at the Liberation Cafe, and give orientations on sending books on Thursday afternoons. Call 866-6000 ext.6144 for questions. Please get involved in this week's activities:

Dan Pens

The U.S. is known as a "disposable society". This characterization was satirized last year on Saturday Night Live with a pseudo-TV commercial about disposable toilets. Use it one. Flush it. And throw it away. Replace it with a shiny new "Dispos-a-John". Some people have long been concerned about the environmental costs of America's disposable culture. They raised public awareness of this issue. Lurid images of overflowing landfills spilled onto the pages of major magazines. Successful recycling programs were begun. Do the examples above ranging from the ridiculous to the sublime represent the whole issue? Are inanimate objects, from hamburger wrappers to automobiles, the only waste products of a disposable society? Increasingly, there is a more disturbing (and unheralded!) byproduct of disposable culture in America: human beings. Am I referring to the 1.7 million Americans in prisons and jails. Yes, in a sense, many of these people have been discarded (think of the "War on Drugs") because they are poor, unemployable, uneducated, of the wrong skin color, and of little or no use to the U.S. corporate economy. However, most prisoners, although restrained from moving freely about society at large, maintain a modicum of autonomy within their prison compounds. We wake up and go to work. We relax and watch TV in the evening, play basketball or softball on the weekends, make phone calls home or enjoy in-person visits with family members.

There are a thousand little perks that make "normal" prison life bearable. I am reasonably comfortable as I sit here typing and listening to classical music on the radio. I think I'll fix a cup of instant coffee. If I want, I can go outside and enjoy some fresh air and a stunning view of the Cascade Mountains.

But if prisons are where society disposes of people who don't "fit in", what do prison administrators do with those who don't conform to the demands of prison life? Solitary confinement? Well, yes, prisons have traditionally had a few cells set aside for malcontents and troublemakers, known as "The Hole" (technically referred to as "administrative Segregation"). But banishment to the hole was temporary, typically a few days to a few weeks. A six-month stay would be considered quite long. And then it would be back to general population, usually back to your old cell (Home Sweet Home).

...if prisons are where society disposes of people who don't "fit in", what do prison administrators do with those who don't conform to the demands of prison life?

Over the last decade, however, there has been an explosive growth in the "Control Unit" (aka "SuperMax") prisons in the U.S. These units are often a "prison within a prison" as with Washington state's "Intensive Management Units" (IMU) located within the prisons at Shelton and Walla Walla. IMU prisoners are encaged in a bare cell for 23 and a half hours a day, often for years.

Human Rights Watch has just released an 83-page report titled Cold Storage: Super-Maximum Security Confinement in Indiana. It is one of the best chronicles I have read about Control Unit prisons. It includes a brief history of the development of the national trend toward super-maximum prisons. Revealed is the fact that 6-15 percent of U.S. prisoners are "seriously mentally ill" (according to cited mental health journals). Mentally ill prisoners fail to "fit in" to prison society, and so they are "disposed of" by long-term confinement in a control unit.

One Pennsylvania prisoner, Victor Hassine, who wrote an extremely informative book about his prison experiences ("Life Without Parole: Living in Prison Today" Los Angeles: Roxbury, 1996) described mentally ill prisoners as "pathetic and disruptive; their special needs and peculiar behavior destroyed the stability of the prison system."

The stability of the system. Stability is a condition highly sought after by prison administrators. And any prisoner who threatens the stability of prison life needs to be gotten rid of.

And so into the wastebins of (in)humanity are thrown mentally ill prisoners; jailhouse lawyers; leaders of prison resistance movements, strikes, or rebellions; political agitators; those who are insolent or belligerent toward staff; etc. Into "Cold Storage" they go.

I can't begin to explain what life in a barren, windowless, concrete box is like. I have lived in such a box, but for no more than weeks at a time. Control Unit prisons are utilized for permanently disposing of those disruptive elements who threaten the stability of prison society.

If you're not "crazy" when you land in the concrete dumpster, after a year or so of social isolation and near total sensory deprivation, unless you have an extraordinarily strong will or spirit, you're likely to be driven mad from the experience. For those who already suffer mental illness, long-term disposal in a Control Unit is nothing less than torture.

Sadly, though, it has become routine. And the cost in human terms is not limited to those individuals who spend long terms in Control Unit isolation. Most of them are eventually released back to society often directly from years of near-total isolation into the cacophony of daily life on the outside.

Dr. Stuart Grassian, a Harvard psychologist who has studied Control Unit Prisoners, describes the phenomenon as follows: "Imagine taking a dog that has bitten someone, and kicking and beating and abusing it in a cage for a year. Then you take that cage and put it in the middle of a city, open it and hightail it out of there. That's what you're doing."

For a copy of Cold Storage, contact Human Rights Watch; 485 Fifth Avenue; New York, NY 10017-6104. If you have a computer and internet access, point your web browser to: http://www.hrw.org. Or to be placed on HRW's listserv, send an e-mail message to majordomo@igc.apc.org with "subscribe hrw-news" in the body of the message (leave the subject blank).

ACLU of Texas Sues On Behalf Of Juvenile Who Died While Jailed

A.C.L.U.

Last November the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas filed suit against the Texas Department of Criminal Justice on behalf of the estate of Rodney D. Hulin, an 18-year-old who died while incarcerated at a Texas state prison.

According to the suit -- filed in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas Houston Division -- Rodney was denied medical attention for his documented mental and emotional problems. In addition, the suit says he was refused the protection he requested after being repeatedly raped by other inmates. Finally, his suicide note was ignored by guards at the Clemens Unit in Brazoria.

Rodney died May 9, 1996, at the Estelle Unit in Huntsville, where he had been in a comatose state since his suicide attempt on January 27, 1996.

"The record will show that Rodney followed departmental procedures to receive mental health counseling and protective custody after being raped and physically attacked by other inmates," said Robert M. Rosenberg, the Houston attorney who will litigate the case on behalf of the ACLU of Texas.

"Had anyone heeded the many warning signs that Rodney was giving, he would no doubt be alive and well today," Rosenberg said.

Instead, the suit states, "the warden of the Clemens unit and his staff, acting as agents of the State of Texas, failed to take any action to provide proper treatment for Rodney in a manner that clearly demonstrates a deliberate indifference to the health, life and general welfare of Rodney in violation of his rights under the Eighth Amendment of the United States Constitution."

Through the lawsuit, the ACLU said it hopes similar tragedies may be prevented in the future.

"The Department of Criminal Justice should promptly provide professional counseling to offenders who claim to have been sexually abused while in state custody," said C.J. Parrish, Director of the East Region Office of the ACLU of Texas.

"Additionally, Department officials should take swift and vigorous action when they have knowledge of an inmate's impending suicide," she said. The lawsuit seeks specific action from the courts on these issues.

On January 23, 1995, Rodney was arrested for arson after starting a fire in a dumpster with a Molotov cocktail and placed in the Randall County Jail. At 16 year of age, one month away from his 17th birthday, Rodney was certified to stand trial as an adult. He plead guilty to the charges and on July 18, 1995, was sentenced to eight years in custody of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

The Middleton Unit in Abilene, a classification and transfer facility, determined that Rodney should serve his sentence at the Clemens Unit, an adult facility in Brazoria County. He was transferred there on November 9, 1995.

In June, Rodney Hulin Sr. spoke out at a Capitol Hill news conference in opposition to pending juvenile justice legislation. You can read about the news conference and see Mr. Hulin's statement at http://www.aclu.org/news/n060397a.html

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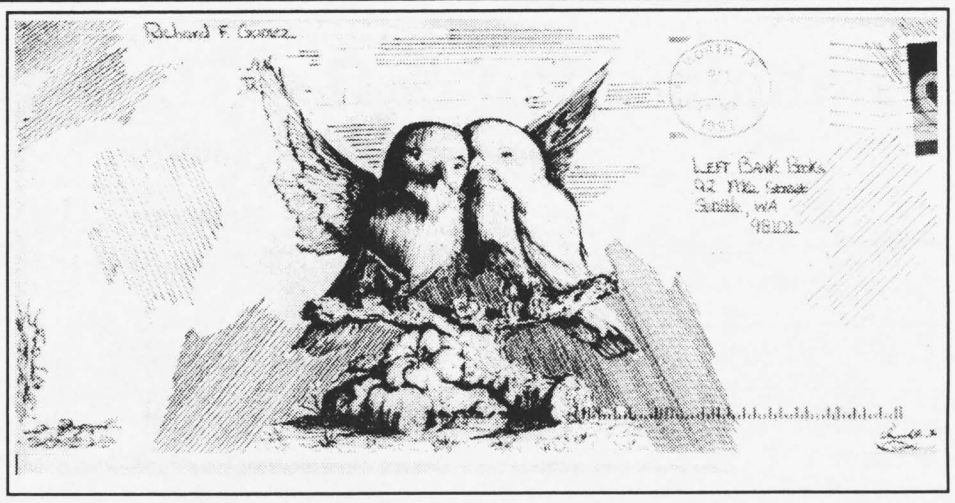
"...Rodney was denied medical attention for his documented mental and emotional problems. In addition, the suit says he was refused the protection he requested after being repeatedly raped by other inmates."



Mental Competency and the Death Penalty

Over the past thirty years the number of mentally incompetent people being executed has increased steadily.

A person who suffers from mental retardation typically has a below average intellect and lacks the kind of adaptive behavior which normally develops during childhood.

Currently, there are more than 300 people on death row known to have mental retardation. Some estimates say that 10% of the death row population may be afflicted with mental retardation.

Since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976, thirty-one people with metal retardation have been executed in twelve different states..

Of the 31 mentally retarded people executed since 1976, 19 of them have been within the past five years.

In 1989, the Supreme Court admitted that "mental retardation is a factor that may well lessen a defendant's culpability for a capital offense."

That same year, the American Bar Association adopted a resolution in which they stated that no one with mental retardation should be sentenced to death or executed because to do so would violate contemporary standards of decency.

Defendants with mental incompetency are unable to appreciate the consequences of their actions.

Generally, people suffering from mental retardation are eager to please others. This means that they will often answer yes to questions even when they don't fully understand what they are being asked.

Jerome Bowden did sign a statement confessing to murder, but only because the police told him it would be to his benefit. It was on the sole basis of this confession -- Jerome could not even read -- that he was convicted and executed by the state of Georgia.

Virginia executed Morris Odell Mason, who had been diagnosed as mentally retarded, in 1985. On his way to the execution chamber, he told another inmate, "When I get back, I'm gonna show him how I can play basketball as good as he can." Mason was 32 at the time of his death and clearly did not understand his impending fate.

Events

• Open work/training sessions every Thurs. 3-9 pm above Bulldog News, 116 E. 4th, Olympia.

• **Submit artwork for BTP Benefit** by Sunday, Feb. 8th noon. Art of all kinds needed for 1st Annual "I Heart Art" bazaar. Contributions may be sent to: Catch of the Day, PO Box 1784, Oly. WA 98507 or brought to: Ace Investigations, 507 Legion Way, Oly, or 943-2981

• **1st Annual "I Heart Art" Bazaar** Sat. Feb 14th. 8-10 pm. Catch of the Day presents this open to all benefit for BTP at 507 Legion Way (near Jefferson St.) Oly. Objects d'arte of all types will be available for a mere $10 a piece. For more information call 943-2981.

• **BTP Volunteer Potluck** - Sun., Feb 15th, 3 pm at Liberation Cafe

• **Prison Awareness Week February 23-27 at TESC**

Monday Evening: Film on Native American Prisoners and Youth in Prison

Tuesday noon: Education in Prison panel evening Women and HIV by HIV/AIDS prison project

Wenesday noon: Women and HIV with 2 former women prisoners and the Project Director of HIV/AIDS in Prison Projects; **evening**: Bo Brown, Out of Control: Lesbian Committee to support women political prisoners

Thursday noon: "Deconstructing the Myths of the Criminal Injustice System" Elihu Rosenblatt of the Prison Activist Resource Center; **evening:** Greg Jackson of Black Autonomy

Friday 3pm: Film; **evening**: Elihu Rosenblatt coordinator of the Prison Activist Resource Center 7pm at the Liberation Cafe

• **Celtic Hoolie** (gathering with music and food) - Sat, Feb. 28th 7pm at the Eagles Hall, 805 E 4th Ave., Oly. Benefit for B to P. Advance tickets at Positively 4th and Rainy Day Records. Info - 352-7336.

Educational Books Needed

Ed. note: This letter shows how projects such as BTP can often be the only educational or reading resource available to inmates. GED books are always needed, and very hard for BTP to acquire. Bring any you can in ASAP!!

Dear Gentlemen:

I am incarcerated in the Texas Dept. Criminal Justice Institutional Division. They don't allow Ad-Seg inmates who are level #2 or #3 to attend school. So I am asking if I can receive a 1997 G.E.D. book and also a 1997 Webster's II Riverside University Dictionary. I will be very thankful if you would. If you don't have an up-to-date G.E.D. book or dictionary, I would like to have any educational books you may have to offer. Thank you very much for your time.

Yours Truly, LaMonte

Your Help Is Needed

Because of the huge number of letters Books to Prisoners-Olympia Support Group receives each month and its limited resources, requests often wait many months to be filled. Thousands of letters still remain in boxes. Your help and generosity are urgently needed.

If we desire individuals in this country's prisons to be caring, thoughtful and sympathetic, then we too need to be caring, thoughtful and sympathetic. We need to "walk the talk." Please donate your time, money or books.

In greatest demand are: English, Spanish/English, Southeast Asian dictionaries, thesaurus, new almanacs, and GED books.

Frequently requested are: African-American, Chicano/Latino, and Native American history and progressive U.S. history.

Please donate:

• Any other good books

• Stamps and stamp money

• Money for tape, wrapping paper, copying

• Save Bayview and Ralph's grocery receipts! (dated July '97 to March '98) B to P receives 1%. Please send to the address below.

• Save the UPC code from Western Family Products and send to B to P

Bring donations of books to the Books to Prisoner-Olympia office at the Liberation Cafe above Bulldog News. Make checks payable to Books to Prisoners.

Address: Books to Prisoners c/o Liberation Cafe, 116 4th Ave, Olympia WA 98501 Telephone: (360) 352-7336

Inmates — All correspondence to Books to Prisoners *must* go through the main branch:
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92 Pike Street
Seattle WA 98101

Globalization & the Classroom

Cara Echevarria

Indonesian fourteen-year-olds work in poorly ventilated factories filled with chemical fumes fourteen-hours a day, 6-hours a week. Their wages translate to a minute percentage of what American youth pay to wear the sneakers they produce. Such stories evoke images of 19th Century America when children toiled in factories of the Industrial Revolution. Nevermind playing tag with friends at recess.

On the brink of the 21st Century Information Age, young Mexican women piece together computer circuit boards in maquilladoras (American-owned and operated factories) for 94 cents an hour. Employees over 24 are considered too old to for the high-detail work, as their eyes suffer the strains of 12-hours with microscopes. Nevermind studying history, mathematics or literature.

For many children around the globe, economic needs override opportunities for education. School is not an option. Under pressures of poverty, children are forced to work rather than attend school. Corporations interested in cheap labor are more than willing to offer employment to those in need. The Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation is working to assist international corporations by removing barriers to free trade. Such barriers include government regulations of child labor and education requirements.

"As educators, we should be concerned that APEC deals in trading with countries that have strong child labor forces," said Shannon Hofstrand, a teacher at Kilo Junior High in Federal Way. APEC is an open dialogue between leaders of 18 Pacific Rim economies, rather than a formal trade agreement like the North American Free Trade Agreement.

While testifying before a US Congressional Committee, Joan Speers, the US Undersecretary of State said "APEC has a customer. APEC is not for governments, it is for business. Through APEC we aim to get government out of the way, opening the way for business to do business."

A report from the Education Forum, a subgroup of APEC's Human Resource Development Working Group stated, "decisions must be taken by a school system for good business reasons with maximum business intervention."

"I think APEC and NAFTA create the beginning of the justification of business to make decisions regarding education," Hofstrand said. "In our district, there's a ton of business partnership proposals. Probably most are purely interested in helping, but I'm sometimes concerned about what is behind those offers. Most businesses have profit in mind."

"It has always been a widely held belief that the purpose of public education is to create a body of people able and willing to participate in a democracy," Hofstrand continued. "Students should be knowledgeable on a variety of topics so that they can actively pursue their interests. Unfortunately, APEC and NAFTA are in the process of changing that purpose. The belief by big business, in general, is that we should be creating workers." According to a recent APEC concept paper, "education means preparing workers for business."

Gary King, a representative at the Washington Education Association Chinook UniServ Council said, "the thing that struck me about APEC was that the US and all other countries represented, were referred to as economies rather than sovereign nations. I am all for supporting global democracy, but not when it's run by the Fortune 500. I don't have a vote on their board."

"Most frightening is that there is no opportunity in the official APEC process for people to participate," said Art Busch, a representative of the Fourth Corner UniServ Council. "No non-governmental organizations are allowed."

The lack of a democratic process is a primary contention against APEC. The memberships of non-democratic nations like China is another concern. Human rights groups oppose the participation of China and Indonesia, both widely known to be gross violators of international human rights laws. For example, ending the occupation of East Timor by the Indonesian military has been a struggle of human rights organizations for 20 years.

"This globalization is inevitable, it's happening, but without basic concerns for human welfare," said Busch. "I am beginning to feel as if America is not only changing, but changing in a way we have no control over because of international capital. From a capitalist and corporate perspective, this has been brilliantly successful."

"The issues we confront—vouchers, public money to fund private education, and charter school proposals, eliminate public accountability," King said. "Attacks by the Evergreen Freedom Foundation on the WEA, to eliminate our power to defend public education, are all connected to this globalization effort."

Unions in other APEC member "economies" face similar attacks. "In South Korea teachers are discharged for union organizing, or even making attempts to resist education reform," King said. "In Canada, [126,000] Ontario teachers participated in a two-week strike in protest of a $2 billion cut in education funds, and attempts to restrict collective bargaining."

Bill 160, "the Education Quality Improvement Act," would give the Ontario provincial government power to set minimum and maximum class sizes, reduce the number of professional development days, and allow non-certified teachers in schools. Bill 160 would also remove the ability of local school boards to levy taxes.

Moves to change the education system in Canada, have those interested in Washington schools thinking of local action. "The union needs to develop our own proposals of what education reform really needs to be," King said. "And it needs to be based on the understanding that reform is to be the improvement of public education, not its destruction. Funding for education must be seen as a right, not as just a commodity."

Never mind playing tag at recess...Never mind studying history, mathematics or literature...economic needs override opportunities for education.

The commodification of education is another worry of those studying APEC. While public funding of schools is reduced, private corporations increase financial support of schools. "Is education a commodity to be bought or sold?" King asked. "If education becomes a part of the marketplace, then there are winners and losers." A dependence on private moneys removes public accountability, and puts decision-making in the hands of those whom answer to stockholders.

"I really feel like these agreements (NAFTA and APEC) are setting business as the priority in creating some stipulations for education," Hofstrand said. "When budgets come up they'll say 'get rid of things that are not deemed necessary,' like drama. The fact that we're being told kids have to learn certain types of skills to be better workers, or they won't be successful in business, frightens me. In Federal Way we were told we're not supposed to teach creative writing as much, but more technical writing."

"Teachers and union members need to ask questions," said King. "Whose interest is being served whenever issues are raised and new proposals are presented? If public education is not being served, then we need to get involved."

"The biggest key is understanding how these issues affect us in the classroom," Hofstrand said. "I don't think it's bad to say that we, as educators, are concerned about issues in other places. It's important that people know the bigger picture that our classrooms are a part of."

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APEC Alert

As part of the continuing education campaign at The Evergreen State College around the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and globalization as a whole, a group working with EPIC has invited several APEC Alert organizers from the University of British Colombia to Olympia to share their knowledge and experiences. These eight people will share how they organized massive demonstrations, informative teach-ins, and building take overs at their campus, and how they related issues of international free trade and global capitalism to local issues. They will also share what is going on now in the progressive Vancouver community since the APEC gathering.

Please join us:

Wednesday, Feb 18 for a welcoming potluck (call 866-1144 for location)

Thursday Feb 19 at 4pm in TESC Lib. 2126 for an organizing workshop

Friday Feb 20 at 7pm at the Liberation Cafe for a presentation of Student Activism in Resistance to Globalization

In November of last year, after intensive planning and education, students from TESC traveled to Vancouver, British Columbia to protest the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). There they joined students of the University of British Columbia, speakers from all over the world, and conscious citizens of our planet, in denouncing the conference attended by corporate executives and political leaders from 18 different nations. The trek by "Greeners" was another successful attempt to express their full-hearted opposition to alliances created for the expansion of "free-trade." The agenda of APEC to increase corporate domination through globalization did not go unnoticed. But the battle against APEC and other forms of corporate expansion was not left in Canada.

Students at Evergreen continue to organize and educate against the affects of globalization. Information is spreading on campus and in the Olympian community about the threat of decreasing trade barriers. The word is out that corporate investment is made easier at the expense of restrictions designed to help maintain a healthy ecosystem and prevent unfair labor practices. Every Thursday meetings are held at 4pm in the TESC library building, room 2126. At the meetings students are educated on the problems of globalization while preparing for upcoming events and presentations. The excitement this month focuses around six to eight students planning to visit from the University of British Columbia.

The students will be speaking for America 2000 and our Political Economy of Inequality, programs at Evergreen, on Thursday the 19th. That same Thursday they will be giving a workshop on effective large scale student organizing in the library at 4:00, room 2126. On Friday the 20th, the six students from UBC will be speaking at the Liberation Cafi on student activism in resistance to globalization. People interested in the APEC protest in B.C. and student organizing, can attend the speakers or go to the Thursday meetings at TESC to help organize against globalization. For more information about their visit and schedule, people can call 866-6000 ext. 6144. The speakers are sure to strengthen the momentum of our local fight against corporate oppression.

Questions and Answers About the Proposal to Fast Track the IMF "Bailout"

Q: What exactly is this situation being called the IMF "Bailout"?

The Clinton Administration is expected to ask Congress to rush through a supplemental appropriation of $15.5 billion in new funding for the International Monetary Fund [IMF]. However, the Clinton Administration's expected money request is not to fund the Asian crisis activities of the IMF. Rather, $3.5 billion is to expand the IMF's general capacity by giving it "New Arrangements to Borrow." $15 billion is for U.S. membership fees called "quotas." The U.S.. provides about one fifth of the IMF's overall membership fees. The IMF is one of three "Bretton Woods" international organizations (along with the World Bank and GATT). Its original function was to help countries bridge temporary balance-of-payments problems. In the past decades, the IMF has extended its mandate to become an agency to compel third world countries to restructure their economies to produce for hard currency exports. In the current Asian crisis, the IMF is busy making loans to Asian countries that cannot meet their foreign debt obligations and requiring them to reorganize their economies.

Q: Why is the request for money U.S. funding for the IMF coming now?

Clinton Administration officials hope that the recent financial crises in Asia and subsequent IMF bailouts of banks with loan exposure will provide momentum to push the new funding through Congress. The Administration is arguing that there is an "emergency" to which Congress must respond with more IMF funding. Yet the $18.5 requested is not needed for the Asian bailouts, the money for which has already been allocated from the IMF reserves and the U.S. Treasury. Rather, it is intended to enable the IMF to carry out similar bailouts in the future. The IMF has been under attack from the left and right as ineffective in promoting global economic stability and often damaging to the countries it is supposed to help. As a result, funding for the international organization has faced growing political opposition. Indeed, last year the Clinton Administration was rebuffed in its attempt to get Congress to approve the $3.5 billion expansion of the IMF.

Q: How will this request be submitted?

The White House hopes to 'fast track' the IMF expansion through by attaching it to a supplemental appropriations bill. Proponents of the IMF expansion have learned through past failed attempts that their efforts are not helped by full congressional debate. In addition, proponents do not want Congress to become involved in setting the terms for U.S. IMF funding. To slide the IMF expansion request through Congress, it may be attached to the vote on U.S. troops in Bosnia. Critics in both parties argue that neither approach is acceptable: such an important policy decision must be fully and publicly debated. Congress must decide what is beneficial to U.S. interests and global economic stability.

Q: Could this money be used to bail out Asia's international creditors?

The money requested is not needed for the current Asian crisis. However, if the financial crisis in those countries gets worse, which it well could, more bailout funds maybe requested. If conditions deteriorate further, the questions now being raised about whether more money should be poured into the same fix if it is not working will increase. So far the Asian bailouts have been financed from two pools: money the IMF already had and U.S. government funds from the Exchange Rate Stabilization Fund. The Clinton Administration argues that it does not need congressional approval to use money from the Exchange Rate Stabilization Fund and has acted accordingly. It is reasonable to assume that new IMF money from Congress will replenish the IMF and will likely be used for similar bailouts in the future.

The IMF has been under attack from the left and right as ineffective in promoting global economic stability and often damaging to the countries it is supposed to help.

Q: Who is opposing this appropriation of new money for the IMF?

Groups from across the political spectrum are opposing new funding for the IMF. Conservative groups that supported fast track, such as the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation, oppose the IMF funding because they believe bailouts of private investors will create market-distorting "moral hazard" encouraging unwise and unproductive investment. The left/right coalition that defeated the Clinton Administration's request for "fast-track" authority oppose the IMF money as an inherently wasteful bailout of a failed investment and trade model. They see throwing more U.S. taxpayer dollars into such bailouts as pouring water into a leaky pool without first patching the leaks. Such groups include Public Citizen, the Citizens Trade Campaign, Friends of the Earth and the U.S. Business and Industrial Council. To date, few Members of the House or Senate have announced support for IMF expansion.

Q: Why are so many groups opposed to the Clinton Administration's request for new funding for the IMF?

Coming at this time, new Congressional funding for the IMF would constitute a "vote of confidence" in the IMF's handling of the Asian financial crisis; unfortunately, no such vote is justified. On the contrary, the IMF's mishandling of the crisis has been criticized across the political spectrum. For example, conservative Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs told the Toronto Globe and Mail: "They [the IMF] are in a process right now of relentlessly squeezing these economies so inappropriately that clearly they're not only not restoring market confidence, they're pushing those economies deeper into crisis."

Q: What is the IMF plan for South Korea?

The IMF plan for South Korea is a carbon copy of its plan for Mexico. Yet, as recently described in a December 19 Wall Street Journal editorial by Paul Gigot, the Mexican "bailout" has cut Mexican living standards by 50%. The IMF has essentially extended its mandate from providing bridge loans for balance of payment problems to becoming an agency to compel third world countries to produce for the U.S. and other hard currency markets. The anticipated result is the loss of high-paying manufacturing jobs in the United States.

Q: Can't the Congress try to impose conditions on the IMF, rather than refuse to expand funding?

The Congress has tried to impose requirements on the IMF in the past without success, because the IMF and the Clinton Administration have ignored the Congress' requirements. For example, in 1994 Congress passed the Sanders-Frank Amendment, which required the U.S. to use its vote in the IMF to promote human rights. However, in its recent bailout of Indonesia, for example, which has been documented by the State Department to be a gross violator of human rights, the Clinton Administration did not even go through the motions of complying with the law. Only the refusal to give the IMF another blank check will capture the attention of the Clinton Administration and the IMF. Moreover, what it is at issue in the coming month is whether the Administration will succeed in getting new U.S. taxpayer dollars for the IMF without full public and Congressional debate: a "fast track" expansion of the IMF for future bailouts of footloose bankers and corrupt foreign governments.

Lori Wallach to Speak on MAI in Olympia

Sunday February 22, at 2:00 p.m.
Olympia Timberland Library

It has been called "The constitution of the global economy" and "a legal firewall between the activities of transnational corporations and the democratic process." Three critics of a little known but far reaching trade agreement called the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) will address an Olympia audience.

Currently the MAI is being negotiated in semi-secrecy at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris. The goal of the MAI is to create a single standard for international investment among signatory nations. Proponents claim that regulatory liberalization will lead to a more efficient utilization of the worlds resources and greater prosperity for all. Critics are concerned with the detrimental effects that the MAI is likely to have on national sovereignty, and well as labor, environmental and human rights issues.

From Washington D.C., Lori Wallach, an international trade attorney with Global Trade Watch (founded by Ralph Nader's Public Citizen) will be the keynote speaker. The efforts of Wallach's staff in educating Congress on the darker side of "free trade" was instrumental in the defeat of President Clinton's request for fast track authority last November. Wallach will be joined by Chantell Taylor of Global Trade Watch and Dan Seligman of the Sierra Club. Also speaking will be Antonia Juhasz the MAI point person for the Preamble Collaborative (which maintains a neutral stance on MAI). This assemblage of speakers will provide South Sound residents with a rare behind the scenes glimpse into the implications of the MAI and the activity that surrounds it in our nation's capital. This free event is sponsored by Olympia MAI-Not! and Public Citizen.

In addition to the presentation, a training session for activist will run between 4:00 and 5:00. For more information contact Olympia MAI-Not!: 754-9585 or 357-6053

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Times Change, and So Do the Tools of Production:

Cutting Edge: Technology, Information, Capitalism, and Social Revolution

Review by Dave Zink

Cutting Edge: Technology, Information, Capitalism, and Social Revolution
Edited by Jim Davis et al.
304 pages, Verso Press, 1997

"When John Henry was a little baby,
Sitting on his mama's knee,
He reached down, picked up a hammer and he said, "Ma,
This hammer's gonna be the death of me, Lord.
This hammer's gonna be the death of me."

Times change, and the tools of production change. Welcome to 1998. Those of us fortunate enough to still have a job share our cubes with a computer or some other high-tech gizmo. There are occasions when I would love to pick up a hammer and use it on my electronic cube-mate but, realistically, it looks like high-technology is here to stay. Proliferating, in fact.

What does "high-tech" mean to us as citizens and workers in a corporate-dominated society? *Cutting Edge* explores not only the new workplace, but the new world that is being created. We have already passed the threshold into a future of dizzying opportunities and potentially horrendous pitfalls. This collection brings together 16 different writers: professors of economics and sociology, computer programmers, software engineers, and social activists.

This book does not present an anti-technology viewpoint. Modern technology has tremendous potential and could help lay the foundations for a higher, better civilization. For the first time in history, the dream of ending material scarcity is within reach.

But first, the bad news.

What is a robot? Forget about C-3PO, R2D2, and other science-fiction for now. A robot is any mechanical device built to perform a variety of tasks under automatic control, programmable by software. The "robot revolution" is not only driving workers from the assembly line - intellectual work is also becoming "de-skilled". A new software program called HARNESS is reducing the work of architects to operating a sophisticated Lego set. Micro-surgeries requiring incredible precision can now be performed by robots.

This is not just part of another business cycle. This is a radical transformation which will be as far-reaching as the Industrial Revolution. In 1970, there were less than a thousand robots in operation around the world. By 1982, there were more than 30,000. According to the U.N. Economic Commission (UN/ECE), the world robot population by the end of 1997 was 747,100. Coinciding with this logarithmic growth, increasing numbers of workers - including professionals - are either being transformed into over-worked appendages of machines, or released from employment altogether to face poverty. This is the meaning of technology under (and "under" is the correct preposition!) capitalism.

I could list some of the lay-offs taking place. But you could get more up-to-date data yourself by reading a major daily newspaper for a month or so and tally all the reported "down-sizing". Then compare your total to the reported hiring. You'll most likely come up with a net loss of thousands of jobs across the country every month. As this continues, American cities will increasingly take on a Calcutta-like appearance.

A society that denies...secure access to basic goods, services, and human dignity harbors a time bomb, ticking away. As more people join the ranks of the jobless, they will increasingly come to see that distribution according to need makes more sense than distribution according to ability to pay.

The phrase "Dark Factories" - where the lights are rarely turned on, because no humans work the production lines - describes the emerging industrial site.

If large-scale replacement of labor by robots continues - and all indications are that it will continue - then where will the new jobs for the displaced come from? In her Cutting Edge essay "How Will North America Work in the 21st Century?", Sally Lerner asks: "A typical response to unemployment is retraining for those made redundant by layoffs and closings. The contemporary puzzle is "retraining for what?".

Young people are among those most impacted by these changes. The fastest-growing sectors of the economy offer "McJobs" at the bottom of the pay scale. Sally Lerner writes:

"Downward mobility, together with long-term unemployment for increasing numbers of individuals and families, will be reflected in decreased purchasing power and material standards of living, as well as in eroded self-esteem, family breakdown, rising crime rates, and all of the other well-documented consequences of unemployment and underemployment. On this path lies the resort to some form of authoritarianism."

What is referred to in the book as a "new class" is coming into existence - the low-wage, part-time, or unemployed, the homeless, the destitute and malnourished. This includes the "structurally" or permanently unemployed - the "throwaway" workers" - whose labor, through no fault of their own, is no longer needed by capital. These people have slim or no hope of ever again finding jobs with good pay and benefits. (It may be semantic, but I would not refer to this group as a "new class" - it is an integral part of the working class. You and I will very likely be joining it.)

This caste is being born out of the "downsizing" caused by the application of electronics to production under capitalism.

At the other end of this growing polarization is a class of immensely rich global investors who dominate the world economy and dictate terms to national governments. To protect their profits, this group lobbies to channel public funds into the hands of private investors, pressuring to privatize social security, for example. Speculators are in a head-to-head confrontation with the growing "new class" of the poor.

What's behind the destruction of the "social safety net"? Nelson Peery, in his essay on "The Birth of a Modern Proletariat" explains: "The major task of government is to create the structural programs and policies that allow the economy to function..."

When industry needed literate workers, the public school system was expanded. When the army needed healthy young men to fight the wars brought on by industrial expansion, nutrition programs were initiated, including a school lunch program ... Government became "big government" in order to serve the needs of industry as it became "big industry".

"[Electronics and robotics] changed the game. Not only were larger sections of the working class superfluous to production, but the new mode of high-tech production no longer needed a reserve army of the unemployed...As industry gave way to the new electronic means of production, it downsized. The government necessarily had to follow suit."

No capitalist is going to support labor he will never need.

Factories where thousands of workers are concentrated are nearly a thing of the past. If the trend continues, there will soon be none remaining in America. NAFTA and GATT are encouraging the export of manufacturing jobs to countries with oppressive regimes maintained by Western governments on behalf of transnational corporations. Capital-intensive agriculture is forcing third-world peasantry off the land and into burgeoning cities, where labor is cheaper than replacing it with machines. Workers from all countries are being drawn into the same shrinking market for labor power, placing strong downward pressure on wages. The splitting of the workforce has diminished labor's capability, based on workplace organizing, to stand up to the dictates of capital.

If high-tech is left in the hands of the corporate ruling class, a situation comparable to Hitler's Germany could develop. We're already reading and hearing talk about "excess population". Will you be seen as part of this group? There is potential for unprecedented surveillance, loss of privacy, and social control.

The new bio-technology - including genetic screening and enhancement - offers the prospect of a eugenic agenda once thought to have been discredited with the fall of fascism. Will capitalist ethics give rise to a genetically engineered class system?

What happens to workers displaced by automation? Either they join the ranks of the chronically un- or under-employed, or they find another job, but one that typically pays less and has fewer benefits. Either way, *their buying power is significantly lowered.* Robots do not earn a wage - they can build cars, but cannot buy them. You don't need to be a Nobel laureate in economics to see that this is bound to pose major dilemmas to corporate decision-makers. To make a profit, its not enough to produce a commodity, you must also *sell* it. The mass markets that keep capitalism going will shrink as fewer people are able to buy those products.

Historically, the forces of production (tools, skills, organizational abilities, etc.) develop faster than the systemic social relationships (ownership, control, etc.). Eventually, the productive forces outrun the relations in which they developed and come into conflict with them. They no longer make sense within the existing social-economic structure. We appear to be entering one of these transition periods. Technology replacing labor spells the end of capitalism as we know it. The problem of our times is not production, but distribution. If there are no wages, there will be no money to buy necessities. How will wageless production be distributed?

A society that denies a large portion of the citizenry secure access to basic goods, services, and human dignity harbors a time bomb, ticking away. As more people join the ranks of the jobless, they will increasingly come to see that distribution according to need makes more sense than distribution according to the ability to pay. Electronics makes such a system possible, but it can never materialize within capitalism.

With these threats looming, it seems like we ought to be witnessing mass popular resistance. Why aren't we? One reason is the sorry state of the mass media - corporate-influenced "public" radio and TV as well as commercial broadcasting. Progressive voices are rarely heard. The entire spectrum of opinion is presented - from conservative all the way to the far right! The resulting distorted picture routinely misleads millions. Corporate media has become an "opiate," working to keep us asleep at the wheel.

Another retarding factor is the Left's pre-occupation with identity and cultural politics to the exclusion of class-conscious politics. This plays right into the elite's divide-and-conquer strategy. So far, it looks like the Left is blowing it badly.

Despite all this (here's where the good news starts!), perceptions are changing. The Gallup poll asks the question: "Is there a class struggle in this society?" In 1961 56% of those polled said yes, and in 1996 81% said yes. Students, feminists, trade unionists, environmentalists have their own goals. But increasingly, they are seeing that they are up against a common enemy.

The Los Angeles rebellion of 1992 was a glimpse of coming struggles. Portrayed by the "mainstream" (corporation-owned) media as a simple race riot, it was actually something far more significant. Nick Witheford, in the essay "Cycles and Circuits of Struggle in High-Technology Capitalism", writes:

"... the uprising was in fact a multicultural anti-poverty revolt involving Latinos, blacks, and whites in a community whose sources of industrial employment had been gutted through automation and global relocation. The 'rioters' were drawn from the ranks of the un- and under-employed... They thus represent precisely the fate with which capital menaces all its laborers in the era of the workerless factory."

"Historically, capital has legitimated itself as the source of wealth and societal organization, as the power that "keeps things going," while workers' strength has lain in the ability to stop production, to "bring things to a halt." Now this pattern reverses itself. High-tech capital stands as the agent of austerity and dismantling, and ... labor, appearing in the form of new alliances, emerges as the constructive force sustaining the community against disintegration."

As corporations replace labor with

(Continued next page)

(Times Change, continued)

machinery, workers will increasingly be compelled to take over the machinery and carry on production *outside* of the corporate system.

Released from it's capitalist shackles, technology can be used to address needs instead of creating profit for a few. This will mean a vast reduction of boring and hazardous work and in the number of hours people would be required to work to have good income and benefits. Andre Gorz writes: "This is unlikely to exceed twenty thousand hours in a lifetime... much less in an egalitarian society opting for a less competitive, more relaxed way of life. This represents 10 year's full-time work, or 20 year's part-time work, or - a more likely choice - 40 years of intermittent work, part-time alternating with periods for holidays, or for unpaid autonomous activity, community work, etc.".

Remember how that contest on the railroad between John Henry the steel-driving man, and the manpower-replacing steel-driving machine turned out? John Henry won, but the strain brought on a fatal heart attack. Our relationship with high technology is similar. Under existing power structures, high-tech will exacerbate the poverty and misery under which most people live. The same technology could provide a decent life to everyone. The problem is that it is now in the wrong hands. It could help end poverty and hunger - if a different class controlled it.

Techno-phobia is an understandable reaction to the daunting changes we are facing. But yielding to it will only further weaken us.

How will the Left deal with all this? The new situation clearly calls for dramatic innovation in organizing and building solidarity between potential allies. We must put sectarianism aside. Since much of the struggle is shifting away from the economic front to the political, we need to go straight for capitalism's jugular. A popular, inclusive, class-based party is crucial at this stage. That means building the Labor Party.

The stakes are high. Radical change is coming. In whose interests will it be? The choice between tyranny and democracy has never been more clear. Will we stand by and allow the oligarchy to further enrich and empower themselves by corrupting the environment and our quality of life? If we do allow it, then we deserve every lethal consequence of our inaction. We need to set our sights on taking control of the technology and using it to transform society in the interests of humanity and for the health of the biosphere, not the corporations. Capitalism - not technology - is our enemy.

This brief review can only scratch the surface of this book. *Cutting Edge* shows how seemingly unconnected developments are related, helps de-mystify "future shock", and points the way forward to a better future.

I'll close with another quote from Nelson Peery: "Humanity has never failed to make reality from the possibilities created by each great advance in the means of production. We stand at the end of prehistory. There is no alternative to stepping across that nodal line and seizing tomorrow."

The editors of "Cutting Edge" are available to speak through the People's Tribune Speakers Bureau. Call 773-486-3551 or e-mail speakers@noc.org.

Events, Announcements, cont.

welcome and invite everyone to come and find out what is going on and what we can do to help (from signing a petition to organizing more events).

For more information call 866-6000 x6749.

Valentine Party for Pals, Partners, and All of Us

Sunday, Feb. 8th, at 2pm
First United Methodist Church

For the second year, Parents, Friends, of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG) will host a Valentine Party, this year including a Freedom to Marry Day Celebration. All gay and lesbian persons in the community are invited whether single or partnered, plus all families with gay members. Special emphasis will be on lesbian and gay couples who want to celebrate this as an anniversary of their commitment. Call 866-0511 for info.

A Celtic Hoolie

A Celtic Hoolie is brewing for the good people of Olympia. A casual gathering with lively music and great food, this event will take place at the Eagles Hall (805 E. 4th Ave) at 7 pm, February 28th. The Hoolie is open to all ages and will benefit the Books to Prisoners (BTP) non-profit project.

Performing will be a bevy of some of Olympia's finest Irish/Celtic musicians and dancers. The Friends of Celtic Music and the Columbia Street Seisiyn Band will provide a wide range of classic and humorous sounds of fiddle, concertina, bodhran (Irish frame drum), cittern, bones, and banjos and an occasional bagpipe. As many as 15 or more talented individuals, such as Dusty Rhodes, Burt and Di Meyers, and Nancy Nelson will perform.

The traditional Irish stepdance troupe, Scoil Rince Sleiveloughane will also be in attendance. This colorful group performs a variety of lively soft and hard shoe reels, jigs, horn pipes and figure dances. Sponsored in part by the Olympia Eagles, celebrating 100 years as a philanthropic, community organization, the proceeds from this benefit will provide much needed basic operational funds for the Books to Prisoners Project that sends free educational and other reading materials to inmates across the country.

Advance tickets for the Celtic Hoolie are available at Positively 4th Street and Rainy Day Records $5 general and $4 senior/student. Admission at the door is $6-8 sliding scale. For more info call 352-7336.

Tenants Union Training Know Your Rights & Advocate for Others

Saturday, February 28th 10am - 6pm
Olympia Community Center

A forming Thurston County Tenants Union plans to work for decent and affordable housing for everyone. The non-profit organization has established a phone system to respond to renter's concerns and problems. In one of its first trainings, Seattle Tenant Union Organizer, Arlin Olson, will educate about the Landlord Tenant Act and how to properly answer questions about things such as eviction, repairs, noise, etc. Lunch will be provided and child care is available. Please call 360/413-4438 in advance to arrange child care and receive an information packet by mail.

TCTU membership dues are based on ability to pay — that is, they are on a sliding scale according to your income, at a rate of $1 per every $1,000 you make each year. For instance, if you make $12,000 a year, your annual membership dues would be only $12. To be included on the TCTU mailing list call the above number or write to 120 State Ave NE, PO Box 1476 Olympia, WA 98501-6800.

The Child Care Action Council

New Project to Connect Neighbors and help Local Community Empower Itself

The Child Care Action Council, based in the Family Support Center in downtown Olympia, has a new program which will work directly with neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Family Advocate Program will be a network designed by and consisting of residents at a predominantly low-income apartment complex in Lacey. It will allow the sharing of skills and resources between residents, reducing dependence on outside service providers and returning control of local resources to the community.

An example of how this might work could involve an unemployed, single mother who finds it hard to look for work because she has two young children. There is another woman in a similar situation a few doors down. They both have the assets of child care skills and time at home. The network could connect these women so they could look after each other's children on days when the other has an interview. This way resources are shared among locals as well as creating bonds between residents and neighborly atmosphere. The positive affects blossom out from there.

The basic idea for the network comes from Asset Based Community Development, a model for empowerment forwarded by John McKnight and John Kretzmann in their book *Building Communities from the Inside Out*. They say that community development initiatives in the past have focused on the negative by looking at the needs of a community — how empty it is. This book focuses on what resources the community already has — how full it is — and how these assets can be built upon. Local strengths are emphasized to show that they are more like a glass half full, rather than a glass half empty.

The program is just starting and we are meeting with residents to help us decide how it will work. We need people to help by meeting with and interviewing residents to find out how they want to shape the program. Women and people of color are especially encouraged to help so we can reach out more effectively to a broader range of people. If you are interested in getting involved or finding out more please call Robert Black at the Family Support Center, 754-9297 or write to The Child Care Action Council at PO Box 784 Olympia, WA 98507.

Not This Letter to the Editor of the Daily Olympian

The following letter was refused printing in the Daily Olympian.

On January 1, 1998, The Olympian printed an editorial saluting the writers of letters to the editor. The Olympian prides itself on printing 90% of letters received, some 1,792. They say, the "No. 1 reason for rejecting a letter is because writers don't provide us with a telephone number. We verify every letter before it is printed." Assuming that "No. 1" means the majority are rejected for the reason stated, nearly five percent aren't printed because of some other reason -- content?

The ending for the January 1st editorial boldly states "Let's keep the dialogue going." It should have continued, "but only on certain subjects."

The following letter to the editor was sent on Jan 6th and verified on Jan 7th by telephone. In a follow-up question, two weeks later, Editor Mike Oakland commented that this letter fell in the 10% that weren't gotten to. You decide why.

January 6, 1998
Dear Editor,

Although the Olympian has written an editorial against I-200, it has ignored the widespread discrimination against women and people of color.

One recent example is the coverage of the sexual discrimination case involving Home Depot. The corporation was accused of placing women into the lower paid cashier positions and keeping them out of the higher paying sales and manager positions. Even when women held the same position as men, they were paid less.

The women sued Home Depot in a class action that involved about 25,000 women. This past September, Home Depot agreed to a $87.5 million dollar settlement. In addition, the company agreed to implement a program that would significantly increase the access of women to the better paying positions.

This story only received a few lines, buried in the business section of the paper. A few days later, a large, front-page article in the Lifestyles Section described an event held at the Olympia Home Depot in which a television personality informed people how to decorate a house.

It is understandable that you would want to help out a fellow corporation that advertises in your paper.

Given the small space you provide to people in the community, I would just like to share my view that your one day

(Continued next page)

Works In Progress seeks contributors

Works In Progress encourages all persons, who would like to voice opinions or bring attention to issues of concern, to send written text (if on disk, IBM text preferred), recorded voice text, photographs, poetry, and/or art work to:

Works In Progress
PO Box 295
Olympia WA 98507-0295

worksinprogress@juno.com

Resumes or journalism writing skills are not required. It is recommended that an article be written in the contributor's own voice from her/his perspective. *Works In Progress* challenges the validity of the widely accepted concept of "unbiased journalism."

Events, Announcements, Finished

editorial against I-200 is not nearly enough to make up for your daily lack of coverage regarding the widespread discrimination against women and people of color.

Sincerely, Clint Burelson

Zero Cut Coalition

by Greg Bye

On January 7th, I attended a rally at Terry Schrunk Park, in downtown Portland, which is just south of the tacky, but venerable — and now famous, thanks to filmmaker Gus Van Sant — statue of a stag. The rally was called by Zero Cut, a coalition organized to end logging on public lands.

"Turn off your television," said one of the speakers, a young woman, and student, from nearby North Salem High. "Stop falling for the timber business' propaganda. Get out and discover that the publicly owned forests have economic uses besides logging." Among those mentioned in her well-timed and rhetorically sharp presentation were: forest restoration, creation and maintenance of trails, and the upkeep of existing parks.

Other speakers warned about the destruction of native salmon runs, and loss of municipal water sources if logging continues in the public forests. A person from Oregon Natural Resources reported that several cities in the region have contaminated water supplies because eroded soil (caused by logging) is getting into watersheds.

An activist from Earth First! stressed the need to extend vigilance for forest protection beyond publicly owned land in the U.S. He pointed out that private timber interests get a small percentage of their yield from public forests. (The speaker said that Forest Service land provides about 3%). Therefore, he urged Zero Cut supporters to link-up with people working to protect forests elsewhere, to include the recovering hardwoods of the eastern U.S., the primevals in Canada, the great forests of the former Soviet Union, and on and on and on. . .

Besides providing information on an event of political importance, I write to give a link from the Zero Cut coalition to people and organizations doing similar work in Olympia. On the Zero Cut coalition list, there is only one group from Washington State: Inland Empire Public Lands Council from Spokane. For information on Zero Cut write Protect our Public Lands, PO Box 25431 Eugene, OR 97402; email-zerocut2@aol.com; or call 541/461-TREE (8733).

Salvadoran Zones of Peace

March 4th

Noon at TESC Lib Lobby

7pm at Olympia Library

Jose Alas is the international representative of Foundation of Self Sufficiency or ITAMA as it is known in El Salvador. The foundation works to empower communities to undertake environmentally appropriate development. Efforts include native tree restoration projects, improved water quality, and community gardens and work with one community of indigenous peoples. This year a major effort will be undertaken — the establishment of a local Zone of Peace, 109 villages organizing do without weapons or violence participation at all levels. Jose Alas will invite our direct and indirect participation in this effort.

Jose "Chencho" Alas is not only the international representative of the Salvadoran Non-Governmental Organization, Institute of Technology, Environment, and Self-Sufficiency, but also the Executive Director of the new US non-profit Foundation for Self-Sufficiency with an office in Texas. He was one of the first to start preaching liberation theology in the 1970s in El Salvador, where he acted as a personal advisor to then-Archbishop Oscar Romero. He organized Christian Base Communities among the rural poor in the department of Cuscatlan, and under his council, the peasants began demanding better treatment and respect for human rights. Because of his work with the poor, he was beaten by the Salvadoran military, threatened with death numerous times, and ultimately forced into exile.

Currently a US citizen, he has continued his work with and for the poor of El Salvador. He will be speaking in the Northwest about one of ITAMA's most recent projects, the development of a "Local Zone of Peace" in a part of El Salvador that was devastated during the war. He will be asking for our direct and indirect support for this historic project.

The idea for the zone of peace originated after the five Central American presidents declared Central America a "Region of Peace, Cooperation, and Development." The aim is to demilitarize the region, respect self-determination, and promote environmentally sensitive sustainable development. The effort is being sponsored by the Salvadoran Institute of Human Rights and six non-governmental organizations, of which ITAMA is the leader. The current conditions in El Salvador make this a very ambitious project.

El Salvador's 10-year civil war left the country with massive poverty and illiteracy, deforestation and environmental degradation, a destroyed infrastructure, and huge numbers of displaced people. As part of the Peace Accords, land was turned over to ex-combatants from both the army and the rebels, and civilians who have returned from refugee camps abroad. These refugees initially fled El Salvador after government bombing of rebel-controlled areas destroyed their villages. These different groups of people have been resettled in communities right next to each other, on mostly undeveloped land with little or no existing infrastructure and very little outside economic support. Given the history of war and the crushing poverty in these areas, it is not surprising that violence is common. To make matters worse, El Salvador is faced with an epidemic of gang violence, exported from the poor barrios of Los Angeles. The Zone of Peace project will set up training and support centers which will emphasize non-violent conflict resolution, and respect for different values, ideas, and political beliefs. ITAMA also stresses that the process of creating peace must go hand-in-hand with a process of economic development, for where there is hunger there can be no peace.

Next summer, August 1998, representatives from 109 villages (over 125,000 people) in the Departments of Usulutan, San Vicente and San Miguel in Southeastern El Salvador will hold a ceremony to declare their area a Local Zone of Peace. It is an attempt to replace a war-induced culture of violence with a culture of peace and non-violence. The ceremony will be held on August 6th, which is El Salvador's national religious feast day, Celebration of the Divine Savior, and also a day long associated with the dropping of the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.

For more information or if you are interested in having Jose Alas speak to your church, school, or group, please call Bob Ziegler at 360/491-7050 or in Seattle call Sarah McFarlane at 206/547-7565.

Permaculture West presents:

AGROFORESTRY

High Value Timber & Multi-purpose Trees

Saturday, March 7th

Wild Thyme Farm, Oakville, WA

Presented by: Michael Pilarski

Agroforestry is the general term for all land-use systems & practices in which woody perennials are intentionally grown on the same land management unit as crops and/or animals.

Michael Pilarski has been researching and teaching agroforestry and sustainable resource management strategies for 20 years. He is the founder of Friends of the Trees Society and editor of "Restoration Forestry: An International Guide to Sustainable Forestry Practices".

Wild Thyme Farm is a privately owned arboretum and natural resources research facility located just 35 minutes south of Olympia, WA. Employing permaculture strategies of integrated design, WTF is being transformed from a foreclosed dairy farm to a model of sustainable rural design. Permaculture West and WTF have been working together to implement agroforestry techniques, fruit orchards, edible landscapes, animal & plant guilds, & much more. Call for an appointment to visit!

Workshop fee: $55 Time: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. AGROFORESTRY SLIDESHOW On March 6th, from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., Michael Pilarski will present his slideshow: "Agroforestry Around the World" in Olympia. Reception is at 6:30. Cost: $5. Location: 2715 15th Ave. NE (on the east side of Olympia, immediately south of the Boulevard St. overpass). Phone: 352-6358.

For more information on the seminar or to register contact: Kirk Hanson C/O Permaculture West 72 Mattson Rd. Oakville, WA 98568 ph./fx. (360) 273-7117 e-mail: permawest@olywa.net

We will discuss many different kinds of agroforestry crops including high-value bamboo, mushrooms, medicinal herbs, seeds, fiber, craftwood, and much more. Maritime climates will be the focus with information on establishment, planting patterns, species selection, and water management. Topics will include: -How to transform pasture land into productive agroforestry farms -Site preparation -Apiculture in agroforestry -Fencing -Soil building -Traditional multi-storey tree polycultures -Valuable hardwoods -Crop selections -Planting patterns & spacings -Using native species -Maintenance -Weed control -Agroforestry systems around the world -Windbreaks, shelterbelts, & hedgerows -Woodlot management -The uses of woody biomass -Silvo-pastoral agroforestry (livestock & trees) -Coppice woodlots -Basketry plantations -Permaculture Design -and more

RAISE YOUR VOICE FOR MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

Mumia Abu-Jamal is an unrepentant Black revolutionary who has been unjustly imprisoned on Pennsylvania's death row for over 15 years. But each day that passes without a new trial makes the threat of Mumia's execution more real. Right now Mumia's case is at the State Supreme Court of PA. While they try to gage the depth and determination of Mumia's support and whether or not to grant a new trial, we need to raise our voices. We must make our demands clear. Mumia must have a new trial. Mumia must be free.

Since his earliest days as a journalist in the Black Panther Party at age 15, he has proven that young people can and must play a leading role in the fight for justice. Today, in order to win Mumia Abu-Jamal's freedom, our generation must once again step up and play that leading role.

No Matter what you do on February 26th, your efforts will be amplified by the actions of others all over the country on the same day.

Here's what you can do starting now: * Call a meeting, get as many others involved as possible. * Ask teachers to let you speak to their classes or show a video about Mumia's case * Get other student groups involved * Endorse this day * Send a money donation to help publicize this event to Refuse & Resist! at the address below * Get up stickers, posters, and banners to make sure that people see Mumia's face everywhere * Get people to wear Mumia buttons or ribbons to show their support and spread the word * Invite a speaker * Get on your nearest college radio station to spread info about Mumia * Hold a rally or a march * Hook up with other schools to have an even bigger impact * Hook up with local artists, poets, rappers, bands and others to organize a cultural event to raise awareness and maybe even some money * Organize a reading from Mumia's books * Send in your suggestions and tips for other activities

Whatever you plan, let us know so that we can share the ideas throughout the network working this day.

Initiated by the National Youth Network of Refuse & Resist! [305 Madison Avenue, Suite 1166, New York, NY 10165, (212)713-5657, refuse@calyx.com] The Student/Youth Network of the October 22 Coalition to Stop Police Brutality [(213)962-8084], Anti-Racist Action [PO Box 82097, Columbus, OH 43202, (614)424-9074, ara@coil.com], The Bruderhof Youth, and International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal [PO Box 19709, Philadelphia, PA 19143, (215)476-8812, send donations here to the Black United Fund] Call (212)713-5657 for more information on this day and where to order Mumia posters, buttons, ribbons, Mumia's books, or the Mumia Resource Guide.

(Police, continued)

the two major areas we came up with.

Our purpose was to take a look at the department's continuum of force policy and to make sure the police officer had followed that policy. Our unanimous decision was that the officer did follow that policy. The shooting was a last resort on his part -- he truly feared for his life.

WIP: You mentioned that your participation was a good experience for you. Do you think citizen participation is generally a good thing or do you think your role was largely token?

Shelan: No, I do not think it was a token role. I think they listened to everybody really closely and I was really impressed with how sensitive the police officers were and the officers on the review panel and the city attorney too. I think it throws a lot of fresh air on the process when a citizen comes in and it also has the double impact of educating the citizens too. Frankly I found it almost overwhelming because there was so much to learn and so much information.

There was also something that really surprised me: as a citizen off the street I would think that there would be numerous times within a year where there would be a discharge of a firearm. Maybe my attitude is a tainted opinion from reading the newspaper and magazines, TV, and the mass media, etc. too much but I was surprised and very pleased to learn that this was the first time in four years that a firearm had been discharged in the line of duty in Olympia. Prior to that, I believe, it was ten or fourteen years. So it's a rare occurrence that a firearm is discharged.

WIP: Based on your participation, do you think citizen participation is a good model for police accountability in the various departmental reviews such as shooting reviews, citizen complaints, and things like that?

Shelan: Yeah I think so. In this one, I think it was a real good move on the part of the police chief to invite a citizen in. I think you need a person removed from the internal workings of the police department to shed new light and bring new perspectives on situations. I think it's a good idea.

WIP: I just had a final question about the new police chief and the remade OPD following the critical Pendleton Report. I know you've been following this issue -- you testified at the Planning Commission's public forum. Any thoughts about that?

Shelan: I think whenever you bring in a new person from the outside, you're going to bring in a new perspective. Chief Michels was very well thought of in Oregon and seems to be bringing in a reasonable, open and sensitive process to the OPD. I do know the technical division of the OPD has been working really hard on developing new training for the OPD. I would say that this department is doing very well especially in recent months.

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WIP: As the new Olympia Police Chief and in dealing with the first major incident here, why did you invite the Thurston County Sheriff's Department in to lead the investigation into the shooting incident?

Michels: We need to be sure there is no apparent conflict of interest in the investigation. I am confident that I have competent investigators in the Olympia Police Department who would do an excellent job investigating it. So that's not my concern. My concern is that the community is going to look at the way we evaluate the officer's performance in this very serious situation — and there is nothing more serious that we get involved with or that the public has more concern about than when police use deadly force. As much as I can do to prevent questions about the credibility of the investigation, we need to do for the officers involved as well as for the community. But I do stress that I'm confident in the competence and capabilities of the Olympia Police Department investigators to do an excellent job.

WIP: And are these the same reasons why you wanted a civilian on the Olympia Police Department's shooting review board?

Michels: Well, the Olympia shooting review board has a little different purpose, although it is somewhat related. I wanted to be sure I had a different perspective about the use of deadly force. Sometimes the cops get into a way of looking at things that is "just the facts" kind of deal, and if I can get as broad a perspective involved in that review, I think that's better for everybody. And for me as the administrator to maybe find out some of the things that I didn't think about because I am a police officer and therefore too close to it. When I can get people from the community involved who have had some dealings with the police and maybe some knowledge (not intimate knowledge) and feel comfortable asking some tough questions I think everyone comes out ahead when we can broaden that perspective.

WIP: What were the specific qualities you saw Charles Shelan having?

Michels: For one thing, I knew him. I met him before, I've talked with him about the Olympia Police Department, and I was familiar with his knowledge about the OPD. I also know that he knows a lot of the community. Those were the two characteristics that I needed. Now, as I'm here longer, I'm going to obviously know more people that will broaden the available pool that I would be interested in and could pick from to have on this group. But because it was such a short time since I've been here, I really wanted to identify people I knew or at least had had a conversation with to gauge their level of comfort in dealing with the police and what community interest they represented.

WIP: So do you see this as a model or policy for any future event that might happen?

Michels: Actually, that is probably a good way of putting it: I would always have a community member on our shooting review board and I would always ask an outside agency to investigate our uses of deadly force.

WIP: What came out of this process with regards to how police are going to handle possible future events?

Michels: Well, I think we still have some work to do on that. Another piece of this for us was last week we had a department wide critique of how we did — how the department did, what kinds of things were in place, how was our training, was there equipment needed — all those things were related to this incident. From that, we've identified a few things we need to work on such as our first aid kits are inadequate — we need different kits in our patrol cars. Things like that we might not really think about in the course of one of these incidents but are really things that we need to be aware of and work on after the fact. So things that we'll be working on are more long reaching. The goal is that we never have another incident where we use deadly force. Now, I might be living on the moon thinking that's the case that we can control whether or not we're put into positions like that as police officers. But when we are faced with them, I want to be sure we are acting reasonably, that we're well trained, that we have options available. When such incidents do happen that we have thorough and unbiased investigations and identify the issues that arise with each individual one (because they are all different) and take appropriate steps.

WIP: For the record, what was the finding of the shooting review?

Michels: "The officers acted within state law and department policy on the use of deadly force."

WIP: And is a copy of that available to the public?

Michels: I think so, let me check on that. I would have no problem releasing that at all. But let me double check that because I'm not familiar with all public information laws, but I would be happy to release it if I could.

WIP: Could you explain how important you think public participation and public accountability of officers actions is? As the new police chief, you seem to off to a good start in terms of involving public participation.

Michels: I hope so. Police departments need to be open to the view of the public. Police officers have a lot of power and it is important for us to be open and not hidden, to be not closed, to have community involvement in our practices. Whenever there is an incident that affects the public, I think that it is only appropriate that the public be involved in giving us input.

That's the way I've always operated and I hope I do everything consistent with that belief because I really do believe it.

Comments

The interview with the Chief of Police of Olympia is encouraging and a vast improvement over the style of the former Chief, both in words and in actions. However, I don't think this solves the problem of police accountability or lack there of.

The Chief's style is the new style that is seen throughout the workforce as managers and administrators seemingly involve their employees and customers in giving input and sitting in on decisions, etc. But the power still remains in the hands of the administration and when we are talking about the police, that means that we, the public, still lack a true role over the public institution. As was told in this interview, the Chief of Police picks who sits on board and wants to keep it that way, only expanding his circle of applicants.

Although I was relieved and glad to hear that Charles Shelan was selected to sit in on the shooting review board because of what I know of him, I still have a couple of concerns about his selection. One is that he is also an administrator and brings that perspective to the board rather than someone who is a worker and feels the impact of management's decisions, whether that be their own bosses or the police, on their own lives. An independent review board comprised of a cross-section of Olympia citizens would not stack the deck with bureaucrats and management representatives only. My other concern is more of an appearance of legitimacy: Community Youth Services, for which Charles Shelan is the executive director, gets partial funding from the City of Olympia, which at the least could be argued as a conflict of interest and at the worst could have influenced Shelan's decision. An independent review board would affirmatively limit candidates with such real or imagined conflicts.

Compare the Chief's choosing with the idea of an independent civilian review board which would conduct a parallel investigation into citizen complaints and use of force cases, etc. The civilian review board would only answer to its own process. And if it were structured in the fashion that the Olympia CopWatch proposed in its April 1996 "Proposals for Improving the OPD", it would have disciplinary power of officers as well as a role in directing policy and training. It would also provide an independent system of checks and balances which is currently confined to the departments of the criminal justice system. In 1992, after a review of the police accountability process, the city attorney was involved to provide an outside perspective. Many citizens do not see the city attorney as being an independent agent of the police -- the distinction is not readily apparent. For there to be true independent review of the police, the board must be comprised of civilians.

What I also find interesting in this interview was the differences of emphasis from Chief Michels and Charles Shelan when asked what came out of the review. Citizen Shelan spoke more about additional training for the police in dealing with suicidals, where Michels spoke more about first aid kits. Michels did mention training and Shelan did speak about officer safety with regards to avenues of retreat.

I am only relatively relieved to hear about the scarcity of police shootings in Olympia because as a member of CopWatch, I've heard many complaints about pepper spraying. American citizens die yearly from excessive pepper spraying, the ingredients of which qualifies it as a tool of torture according to some human rights groups. CopWatch has encouraged public testimony to the Olympia City Council on incidents of apparent random and unnecessary pepper spraying. As far as use of force goes, no citizen-participating review board was convened to ascertain whether or not they were reasonable uses. The Continuum of Force plan is not necessarily a public safeguard against excessive force but is a checklist of what police officers have to do to protect themselves from reprimands and/or law suits. That is why they are supposed to say, "Stop. Police" before they shoot. Excessive force happens regularly and concentrating on the most glaring horrors (shootings) does nothing towards helping make the police treat all citizens with respect.

If you would like to become involved in police accountability issues then you are encouraged to either call the Olympia Police Department at 753-8300 or call CopWatch at 705-2726.

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